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MIRROR OF TASTE

AND

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

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HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

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IT was not till the beginning of the seventeenth century that the dramatic genius of France was warmed into full and exuberant production by the sun of its poetical hemisphere. At that era, the great luminary, CORNEILLE, rose above the clouded horizon, surrounded by a host of satellites, his precursors, his contemporaries, and his followers in the career of glory.—Nature, as if she were disposed to atone to France for her former parsimony, poured upon that country, in one half century, a greater number of eminent dramatic poets than any other country could boast the possession of in a much longer period. High raised, in proud preeminence above the rest, stood PETER CORNEILLE, who has always held, and in all likelihood will for ever hold, in that country, the same superiority that Shakspeare holds in Great Britain. This great man was born at Rouen, in Normandy, in the year 1606. He was brought up to the bar, which he abandoned, either as unpleasing to his taste or unsuitable to his talents. At the time of his birth DESMARETS and CHAPELAIN were eleven years each, and COLLETON

was in his eighth year; **BOISROBERT** was fourteen years of age; the renowned **GEORGE SCUDERY**, of whom mention has already been made as the panegyrist of Hardy, and the no less celebrated **FRANCIS TRISTAN**, surnamed "The Hermit," were each in the fifth year of their age; **MAIRET** was two years of age; and **DU RYER** one. On the other hand, speaking in chronological order of their births, **CORNEILLE** was followed in three years after by **ROTROU**. Thus we see that great luminary accompanied, as he rose to his meridian height, by a constellation of inferior yet brilliant planets, who moved in various orbits around him. As the history of this era contains circumstances of a singular nature, it may be expedient to give a short sketch of the life and character of each of those persons.

FRANCOIS LE METEL DE BOISROBERT was, as well as **CORNEILLE**, a Norman by birth, being born at Caen. At an early age he was distinguished for the brilliance of his wit, the facetiousness of his humour, and the vivid flashes of a lively sportive fancy. These happy mental endowments, aided by a comprehensive, vigorous and retentive memory, and enriched not only by classical erudition but by all the treasures of Boccace and the Florentine school, rendered his conversation singularly attractive, and raised him to the favour of cardinal Richelieu, then prime minister of France.

DESMARETS was a man of some wit; and he too enjoyed the favour of Richelieu, which he is said to have acquired more by cunning and servility than by any superiority of talents: he published several dramas, none of which were very remarkable for any thing but their being supposed to be in part written by the cardinal, who, in requital for the pleasure of this poetical copartnership, conferred on Desmarests several lucrative offices in the state; while **CHAPELAIN**, whose genius fell short of that of Desmarests, was the great man's drudge of all works—a kind of common bail who stood the brunt of those things which the others thought disgraceful to them, and fathered all the contemptible passages in the writings of the proud, mean cardinal.

COLLETET was a counsellor, and a member of the French academy, who also enjoyed the patronage of Richelieu; but, wanting the cunning of Desmarests, died in such poverty that he left not wherewith to bury him when he died.

SCUDERY was descended of a noble family. He too was a Norman, being born at Havre de Grace in 1601. He served with honour

in the army, in which he obtained high rank, and was admitted of the French academy.

TRISTAN was born in the province of Le Manche in the year 1601. His fortunes, like his descent, were singular and marked with the stamp of romance. Lineally descended from the celebrated *Pierre Le Hermite*, or Peter the Hermit, the original author of the crusades, whether it lurked in his blood or was derived from a constant retrospection of his ancestor's example, he seems to have been as chivalrous and as little fitted for the world, as the pious and sanguinary Peter himself: for being placed near the person of the Marquis de Verneuil, a natural son of Henry the Fourth, he quarrelled with an officer, fought and killed him. To save himself from the ignominious death, which would have inevitably followed the perpetration of *honourable* murder, he fled to England, and there he imbibed, for the first time, a taste for literature and poetry. Through the interest of Marshal de Heunieres, he obtained a full pardon from Lewis the Thirteenth; and returning to Paris, was taken into the service, as one of the gentlemen in ordinary, of the celebrated Gaston de Orleans, the king's brother. But the emoluments of his office, together with all that he could glean from his pen, as a poet, were very inadequate to the expenditure of a man devoted to women and gambling. His merit as a writer was very considerable. As a dramatic poet he very much excelled Scudery. Eight dramas are known to be his, and two more are ascribed, but with less certainty, to his pen. His tragedy of *Mariamne* has great merit and, as well as some other pieces of his composition, has been made use of advantageously by after writers of more celebrity.

It has been said, and not without reason, that a remarkable congeniality of character, as well as similarity of fortune and of fate, subsists between Tristan and our ill-starred poet, Savage, whose life by Dr. Johnson may be ranked among the very highest specimens of biographical composition of this or indeed of any age or country. Endowed with nearly equal genius, and oppressed with equal miseries arising from similar causes, he lived long in poverty and died in disgrace. Like Savage, he abused fine talents, and frustrated every effort to save him; trifled with his character; neglected, irritated, or tired out his friends, till the most grinding indigence reduced him to hunger and to rags; being reduced, as Boileau informs us, to go without a shirt in summer, and in winter to be destitute of a coat. And as Savage, in his admirable

poem of "The Bastard," has left to the world a detail of his low condition, so Tristan has left an account of many of the leading circumstances of his turbulent and eventful life in a romance intitled "The Disgraced Page."

It was on the writings of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, who had been some time dead when Tristan arrived in England, that this poet formed his dramatic taste. With Massinger too, then living, he enriched his mind. This is an incontestable proof not only of the priority of England to France in the perfecting of their respective dramas, but of the improvement which the latter derived from the former: for it is evident, that at this precise era the productions of the French theatre, till then dull, frigid, and inanimate, began to catch a spark from the muse of fire of Shakspeare, and to glow with a fervour and a lustre reflected from the bard of Avon.

MAIRET, who was born two years before and died two years after Corneille, was of high connexions, and was created a nobleman for the valour he displayed when serving under admiral Montmorency. Beside other works, he wrote twelve plays, most of which are tragicomedies, and very indecent; so much was it the fashion of the time to imitate the faults as well as to aspire to the excellencies of the British writers. Du Ryer was a writer of greater genius; but being much embarrassed in his circumstances, and wanting the splendid connexions by which, much more than by genius, the reputation of Mairet was kept alive, he never received justice, or even common fair play, till death rendered him insensible to all things of this earth. He wrote four and twenty pieces, of which some have extraordinary merit. One of his plays has received the concurrent eulogies of some of the greatest personages and most enlightened critics of Europe. *Alcione* is said by D'Aubigne to be replete with beauty and grandeur; Menage sets it down as a *chef d'œuvre*; and it so entirely attracted the admiration of Christina, Queen of Sweden, that she had it frequently read to her.

Lastly, and certainly nearest in merit to Corneille, of all the poets of that day, came Routhou, whose productions are thickly set with rich poetic beauties, and whose praise it is to have devoted his labours to the improvement of the drama, and to the rendering of tragedy more natural and at the same time more interesting. Whatever either faulty or inferior to the level of his genius appears in his writings, may be ascribed to haste: being devoted to the vice

of gambling, he was often hard set for means, and his overspurred muse had often to repair the breaches made in his affairs by the mischances of the gaming table. Tragicomedy being then the prevailing taste, (a taste imported from England) Routrou, in common with all the dramatic poets of the day, had recourse to the Greek, Roman, Italian, Spanish and English dramatic poets for subjects—all of them originally taken from romance, and which, with their fantastic extravagancies, had more the semblance of knight errantry than of nature. He however did only as others did. Even Corneille was not wholly exempt from the same faults and errors; and there is reason to apprehend that if he had not suffered himself to be hurried along by the tide of the times and indulged too much in the extravagant taste then in fashion, Routrou would have been but little inferior to his gigantic cotemporary Corneille.

In the long history of human infirmity few spectacles are to be found which to the moral eye are more curious, or indeed much more contemptible, or mortifying to the pride of the species, than that which the intrigues of the cardinal Richelieu with his poetical dependents, to bolster up his literary fame and indulge his vanity, present. As such the history of this period of the French stage deserves particular attention, and more than ordinary care in the management of its details.

It would seem as if the same spirit of intrigue and turbulence, which actuated the cardinal in his capacity of a statesman, informed him in all the other departments of his life; and that the temper, which rendered him intolerant of peace in the former, made him incapable of rest in the latter. His munificence to institutions of learning and science, and his patronage of men of letters, would have immortalized him as the *Mæcenas* of his age and country, if the former were not tarnished by inordinate pride and ostentation, and the latter were not justly liable to the imputation of being founded in selfishness, and a puerile, pitiful ambition to obtain credit for works that did not belong to him, and to reduce those whom he patronized to the disgraceful condition of pandars to his vanity, his jealousy, and his revenge. With much of the ability and more of the ambition of a great man, but little of the virtues of a good one, Richelieu patronized the arts and sciences merely to have the reputation of being surrounded by men whose works and gratitude could confer upon him immortality. His natural vanity being inflamed by the adulation of dependent poets, he fondly

conceiyed that a pretty little talent for poetry, which he really possessed, raised him to a level with Corneille; he looked upon that great man as his rival, as his rival hated him, and absolutely suffered himself to be so far gone in fatuity as to be madly jealous of the celebrity of *THE CID* of that wonderful poet; in consequence of which he employed some of his literary hirelings to attack Corneille, and, by all practicable means, to depreciate his compositions.

The cardinal's private poetical cabal consisted of Routrou, Desmarests, Colletet, and Boisrobert. These four with Corneille helped the cardinal in the composition of some wretched pieces. It is generally thought most likely that he wrote them first himself, and that they were then revised and amended by the five poets, who underwent the disgrace of fathering the miserable things in order to shield the great statesman and divine from the scandal of being a dramatic poet. Of those pieces thus fathered to the public eye, by those writers, who went by the name of "The Five Poets," the names of three are particularly recorded as being the cardinal's, accompanied with some anecdotes well worth relating, as highly descriptive of the character of that extraordinary personage.

Being not only persuaded in his own mind of the excellence of a piece he had just composed, called *Eurofe*, but perfectly confident of its success, he resolved to have the opinion of the French academy to back his own. Of obtaining this he had little doubt, not only because he was assured of the merits of his composition, but because that academy was founded by himself, and was chiefly composed of his own creatures. He, therefore, ordered Boisrobert to lay it before that learned body; and, in his name, to desire they would peruse it and give their opinion of it, sincerely, and unqualified by flattery, and entirely apart from any partial consideration of their respect and personal feelings towards him: he added too, an injunction that they should freely and candidly correct any thing they found in it censurable by the rules of the stage or the general laws of poetry.

Flattered by the condescension of the cardinal—not a little elated with pride at the testimony to their merits contained in this unlimited privilege—and unwilling to neglect such an opportunity of showing their wisdom and authority, they sat down with the most perfect good will and appetite to the work of criticism; and without once giving themselves time to consult their own cunning or their patron's feelings, they so mangled the bantling of the cardinal's

brain, that, when it came back to him, a very small portion of it was legible, it was so mutilated and filled with blots. Like poor Sir John Suckling's stockings, it was so mended, patched, pieced, and darned, that very little of the original fabric remained to testify to the cardinal that it had once been his own.

The triumph of cutting up the cardinal being over, the confidence of Boisrobert began to flag as he returned to his eminence: on his way he was troubled with doubts and misgivings of the prudence of the academy, and could not help lamenting that the very first act of sincerity to his grace of which they had been *guilty*, was likely to be attended with serious consequences. It was now however too late, and far out of his competence to correct it: he therefore, with every softening circumstance which caution and cunning could suggest, made his report to Richelieu, and at the same time presented to him his copy in its dismal state of mutilation.

The cardinal, though universally renowned, has been celebrated for nothing more than the equanimity and christian patience with which he could bear the disasters of his country, and stand unmoved under the severest shocks which the state and empire sustained under his warlike administration; but his country and the bantling of his brain were two different things, and very differently indeed affected him: he fairly sunk under the blow given to the latter, lost all patience, and with it all his prudence, and his comfort too; so tearing to pieces the copy in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment, he threw the fragments into the fireplace, and, groaning with despondency and grief, retired to his bed.

After he had lain for some time sadly ruminating on his misfortune, his temper settled down and his reason in some sort returned to its office. He began to suspect that he had been rather rash; and it afforded him a gleam of comfort to reflect that there had been no fire burning in the fireplace into which he had thrown his precious production. He, therefore, thought it best to make a virtue of necessity, and to save his dear offspring, disfigured as it was by the barbarous hands of the tasteless academical ruffians; so he sent for his secretary Cheret—ordered him carefully to collect all the fragments of paper in the chimney, sent him to the laundry for some starch, and, these being brought, sat up the whole night pasting and piecing the play till, just about day-break, he had it restored to an almost legible condition. That day he stood by while it was

recopied, and, as it was in the process of transcription, ordered the corrections of the academy to be altered, some few trivial ones excepted; which done, he sent the new copy back by Boisrobert to the academy, with a condescending intimation to them, that they might observe he had profited by their advice——But that, as it was possible they might not be more infallible than him, he had not altogether abided by their alterations.

The academy were at first confounded; but Boisrobert, Desmarets and Colletet soon found means to convince them that they had been all wrong, that the cardinal was a better judge of his own play than all of them put together, or at least that, however judicious they might be as poets, they must have been silly politicians to find fault where they were expected to praise; wherefore they came to a resolution *nem. con.* to return the play to his eminence unaltered, and to accompany it with a reverential letter stating their approbation of the piece, professing the vast delight they felt in reperusing it, and assuring him of their confidence of its success before the public.

Another characteristic anecdote of the cardinal shows him in a still more ridiculous and contemptible view. He procured, at the expense of one hundred thousand crowns, a play of his, called *Mirame*, to be brought upon the stage. It failed of success on the first representation. He assisted, himself, in person at the performance, and was nearly frantic with despair when he found it rejected. Filled with rage, consternation and chagrin, he repaired to his palace and gave orders for Desmarets to attend him straight. Frightened to an agony at the thoughts of facing the cardinal alone, the unhappy poet brought along with him a friend of the name of *Petit*, a shrewd, cunning fellow, full of humour, and happy in a more than common share of impudence and presence of mind. The moment they entered the cardinal's closet, he abruptly exclaimed to them—"What think you now? Will the French people, do you think, ever have any taste? Could you have believed it possible? Do you know, they were not delighted with my *Mirame*?"—*Petit*, who saw that Desmarets was overwhelmed with confusion, and thought that he himself knew better how to humour the cardinal, without hesitation replied, "I assure you, monseigneur, it was not the fault of the play, which is really admirable;—it was entirely the fault of the actors. Your eminence cannot but have perceived that they were not only imperfect in their parts but that they were

all beastly drunk."—"Yes, yes," said the cardinal, "I could perceive it; it was plain enough:—well! we shall see what is to be done on the next representation." The part they had to perform was now plain enough to the two parasites. They contrived to select and pack an audience, all of whom were admitted gratis, and some were even paid for attending. Miserable weakness!—stupid infatuation! deplorable inconsistency!—That a man whose counsels were to guide and govern a mighty empire, and to whose will it was competent to agitate and shake the whole continent of Europe, should be the dupe of such mean, such pilfering propensities, and so blinded by his passions as not to see that his petty artifices were transparent, and that such creatures as those who stooped to be his agents were incapable of fidelity.

Paul Pellison Fontanier, the historian of Lewis the Fourteenth, in his history of the French academy, states with pointed circumstantiality, that the great Richelieu enjoyed the plaudits of this hired audience with as enthusiastic delight as if it were the real voluntary applause of an impartial, unhired audience; that in order to encourage and increase the applause, and bring it to bear more directly upon him personally, he constantly showed himself to the audience; that he frequently commanded silence, in order that the particular passages, which he most affected, might be more distinctly heard, and better attended to, and that he even went so far as sometimes to applaud the piece himself, in order to induce the crowd to applaud also.

And now for a specimen of what the pandars of such men may expect from their principals!—In his zeal to accomplish his object for the cardinal, and the hurry and bustle attending the packing of the house, poor Boisrobert, not being able to distinguish his recruits, or to discriminate between their characters, unfortunately introduced some women of tainted reputation into the same box with the Dutchesse of Aiguillon, who, upon being informed of the very bad character of the ladies who had been thus set cheek by jowl with her in public, was so exceedingly enraged that she insisted on Richelieu's discarding the unhappy offender. The cardinal was mean and ungrateful enough to comply, and poor Boisrobert was banished. The academy however acted, upon the occasion, with a spirit which may be considered as in some sort atoning for their abject submission in the affair of the altered play of *Europe*: for

knowing how very little cause the cardinal had to be displeased with Boisrobert, they demanded his recal, which nevertheless was delayed, till Richelieu, being taken ill with chagrin and mortification at the issue of that shameful affair, sent to his physician for a recipe; when *Monseigneur le Medicin*, who probably had his cue, as well as fee from his eminence, answered that the best physic would be the presence of Boisrobert; on which authority the discarded favourite was recalled.

The cardinal brought forth a comedy called *The Tuilleries*, which he caused to be performed at his own palace, attending the disposition and arrangement of the scenes, with all the industry and earnestness of the manager of a strolling company. Corneille was desirous to make an alteration in one of the acts, and felt rather embarrassed upon the occasion, fearing to offend his eminence on the one hand, and on the other being averse to let the piece go into the world with an absurdity on the face of it, which could not fail to excite merriment at the expense either of the cardinal or his stalking horses, the five poets; but when, with some difficulty, he proposed it, the great man replied, “*Il falloit avoir un esprit de fuite*,” or in plain English, that he must take care and be very accommodating!

The stage history of all the nations of the earth presents nothing that can maintain a competition in weakness, absurdity, and monstrous taste with the writings and conduct of Richelieu as a dramatist. For the comedy of *The Tuilleries* he wrote a prologue, which, to the public eye, he saddled for a time on his packhorse Chapelain. In this curious composition he fulsomely praised in detail all his authors, who were placed, for the purpose of receiving this contemptible incense, in conspicuous situations among the audience. When the comedy was fairly transcribed, Colletet was ordered by his eminence to read it to him. Colletet proceeded to comply; but no sooner had the cardinal heard him read the following four lines in the first scene of it—

En meme temps J'ai vu, sur le bord d'un ruisseau
La canne s'humecter de la bourbe de l'eau
D'une voix enrouee, et d'un battement d'aile
Animer le canard qui languit aupres d'elle,—

than he stopped him short, and, in the fulness of his raptures at the beauty of the passage, laid him down fifty pistoles, bidding him at the same time read no further, for that the whole revenue of the

crown would not be sufficient to pay, at the rate they deserved, for the rest of the beauties of the piece.

Now, that such of our readers as are not sufficiently acquainted with the French language to understand these lines, may be enabled to form some conception of the taste and genius of the great cardinal Richelieu, a translation of the passage into English is offered them:

So have I seen, inclining to be fond,
The humid duck explore the muddy pond,
Ply her hoarse voice, her wings in dalliance shake,
To animate to love her amorous drake.

It is very justly remarked by the historian, to whom we are indebted for these facts, that in all probability it was this passage which suggested to the Duke of Buckingham that laughable image in the Rehearsal:

So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
Snuff up and smell it gathering in the sky;
Boar beckons sow to trot in chesnut grove,
And gently whine their tender tales of love.
Pensive in mud they wallow all alone,
And snort and gruntle to each other's moan.

And to Farquhar also the simile of "two intriguing ducks in a mill pond," which he puts into the mouth of Scrub in the Stratagem.

Some time after the first reading of the piece, the cardinal took it into his head that these beautiful lines might, by a slight alteration, be made infinitely more beautiful, and sent for Colletet to talk with him upon the subject. "I have been thinking, Colletet," said his eminence, "that, by the change of a word or two, the image presented in this passage will be very much heightened, as thus instead of

La canne s'humecter de la bourbe de l'eau,—

I would make it

La canne barboter dans la bourbe de l'eau.

In plain English, the duck, instead of washing herself, should be said to muddle in the pond. Colletet, unable to determine upon what he should say, requested time to consider the matter, as a thing of too great importance to be lightly or hastily decided upon, and promised to write to his eminence respecting it. He did so, humbly submitting to his patron whether the word *barboter*

(muddle) was not too low, and unfit to be applied to so grave and delicate a subject as the chaste passion of a duck and drake. On reading this, the cardinal fell into a transport of rage, to which he was just giving vent when some of the courtiers entered to give him information of a signal victory obtained by the arms of France in a certain battle, the whole preliminary plan of which had been concerted by the cardinal himself. "Nothing," said they, in the usual style of court adulation, "nothing can resist the wisdom and power of your eminence."—"You are mistaken," exclaimed he, still in a rage, "that scoundrel Colletet resists me. I did him the honour to alter a line in his play, and he has the assurance to write me a long letter—here it is—to make me believe that I am wrong."

How such a man as Corneille could have been betrayed, even for a moment, into a confederacy with such a band of slaves as those pandars of Richelieu, it is difficult to imagine. However he was never active in their business, and very soon withdrew himself from it entirely. This incensed the cardinal, who, in return, did every thing he could to injure him. Perhaps there is not, among the many foolish things related concerning Richelieu, one more perfectly absurd than the method he adopted of carrying into effect the revenge he meditated. This was nothing less than to represent once more his play of *Europe*, which had been damned, and set it up in opposition to *The Cid*, one of the noblest dramas ever penned by man. It happened, however, that the people thought of *Europe* very differently from the cardinal, for when the actor came forward to give it out, he was hissed off the stage; nor would the audience suffer any thing to be done till *THE CID* was given out for the next night.

(To be continued.)

BIOGRAPHY.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

[Continued from page 151.]

BIGGS moving with his company from Bedminster to Taunton prevailed on Warren to join him there. Having now a tolerable set of players with him, particularly Bignell, Baynes, and the family of the Keys, who were all favourites with the people of Taunton, great hopes were entertained of their success in that town, and it was under the influence of those hopes that Warren agreed to accompany them. However he was sadly out in his reckoning; for they could do nothing. Dire necessity pinched them to the very bone, and, to use the words of Macbeth, famine clung to them. Night after night they were compelled to dismiss the house, till at last tired of dismissing, and perhaps ashamed too of their want of attraction, they stopped altogether, and each actor found it necessary to bethink him of the course he should next steer to recruit his finances.

It happened that at that time Mr. Jefferson, the father of our celebrated comedian of that name, was at the head of a company in the beautiful town of Totness, in Devonshire: from him Warren received an invitation with which it may be concluded he cheerfully complied; and accordingly set off in company with another actor, a fine young fellow of the name of Woolley, to join his new associates. Here he opened with Orlando, in the comedy of "As you like it," and young Philpot, in the farce of The Citizen, in both of which he received a very flattering reception. The next night he performed young Mirabel, in Farquhar's charming comedy of The Inconstant, with no less applause. In telling these encouraging circumstances however, Warren always takes care, in the modesty and sincerity of his heart, to qualify the relation with a voluntary acknowledgment that in those strolling companies there are so many very bad players, or, as he calls them, "*shocking fellows*," that a very small portion of merit indeed suffices to impart pleasure

and obtain applause. At the time we are now speaking of, our Philadelphia Jefferson was acting boys' parts under his father—probably just such another youngster as his son who now plays the elder of the princes in Richard the Third. After some time spent at Totness, Mr. Jefferson moved to Exeter, and Biggs getting intelligence of it, proceeded without delay to Totness and made Warren offers of a very tempting nature to join him again at Taunton. Knowing that our friend was resolved never again to run the risk of being left entirely in the lurch, but at all events to eat, and that of course he could not expect him to join on the old delusive terms of *shares*, on which he had so often shared nothing, and yet being desirous to procure his services, if possible, he actually made him the generous, splendid offer of a salary of—ten shillings sterling per week!—that is to say, two dollars and twenty-two cents, with a benefit, as customary, at each town. Insignificant as the sum may now appear on this side of the Atlantic, it was then a consummation devoutly to be wished, and was indeed to a temperate young man, unincumbered with wife or children, a comfortable subsistence: a satisfactory proof, no doubt, of the cheapness of the country in which he then resided. Having closed with Biggs, Warren set out for Taunton, not as usual on foot—for as it was winter, he thought it better to go by the stage: “I was now *beginning to rise*,” says he, “and took my seat on the *top* of the coach.”

I believe it is a truth universally conceded that, with the exception of poets and authors, that genus irritabile vatum, the most irritable and envious beings to each other in this world, are, generally speaking, players; a fact which, how extraordinary soever it appear, may be accounted for on rational principles, and indeed on the same grounds with respect to both. The salary given to Warren stuck like Macbeth's **AMEN**, in the throats of his brother actors: the thoughts of it did, “like a poisonous mineral, gnaw them inwards,” and created much ill blood in the company; and truly when the cause of their discontent, the salary, is considered as regarding the amount of the sum and the work done for it, it will explain more fully than pages of words could, the condition and the consequent feelings of the body of Itinerants. One would hardly imagine that ten shillings a week could be an object of such great importance, more particularly when saddled with the labour of playing perhaps eight or ten characters of various kinds;

more especially as Biggs, who was not accustomed to let any one with whom he dealt have the best side of a bargain, exacted from Warren, for this small salary, the further toil of writing out the scene plots. Miserable however as the salary may seem, it was the production of much advantage to our hero's feelings, because being fixed, it exempted him from the peculation of the manager, insured him wherewithal to live, and prevented those heartburnings and bickerings between him and Biggs which the nightly settlement of a sharing plan seldom failed to produce. In this respect, therefore, they got on together tolerably well, having very seldom any cause for contention. The only subject of disagreement between them was the permanence of their connexion—Warren was desirous to go away; Biggs was desirous to keep him. As usual the distresses of the company were great; his weekly ten shillings was all Warren received; for by his benefit he neither gained nor lost any thing. Some few of the benefits succeeded; but they were those only of actors who, groaning under the burdens of wives and children, were fain to solicit personally the support and patronage of the surrounding gentry, or in plain English, to beg—genteelly; the fate too often of worthy and meritorious performers, and which, after all, succeeds at times so badly as to reduce them to the necessity of pawning their clothes to procure food for their families.

Having tired out the people of Taunton, and exhausted the patience of those creatures of sufferance, his actors, Biggs moved off to Honiton, accompanied by no one but Warren, Woolley, Reynolds, and his own family, all the rest having deserted him. At Honiton they were joined by one or two others, but three weeks elapsed before Biggs could get every thing in readiness to perform: meanwhile the young men were not idle. It happened that a company, or rather a fragment of a company, headed by a manager named Smith, lay at Glastonbury in the greatest distress imaginable. Hearing of the arrival of Biggs's company at Honiton, Smith implored their assistance, and begged of Warren to come to Glastonbury and perform a few nights to relieve him and his actors from famine and probably imprisonment. Warren, without hesitation, flew to the assistance of his unfortunate brethren, and, accompanied by his friend Woolley, arrived at Glastonbury.

Mr. Smith's company was no less poor in numbers and low in quality than deplorable in pecuniary condition. Of the talents of the actors it is enough to say that the hero was old Jack Montague,

whose name for many years stood conspicuous in strolling annals for the extreme badness of his performance, his consequent poverty, the extravagant opinion he entertained and never omitted an opportunity to express of himself, and above all, his disproportioned and ridiculous self-importance. This poor gentleman, who had long gone by the name of *Old JACK*, was now very far declined into the vale of years, had at all times been of an odd appearance, far from handsome, never over-clean, and, by way of setting off the natural beauty of his externals, chewed tobacco so immoderately that his mouth was always stained brown and his lips besprent with fragments of that filthy herb, while the juice of it oozed from either corner of his mouth down the furrows of his deep channelled chops, like foul bilge water from the scupperholes of a ship, and thence trickling through his beard, bedewed his cravat and bosom. Such was the personage who, on the very night that Warren and Woolley arrived performed the character of *Oroonoko* to the good people of Glastonbury, while Mr. Smith, who though manager, was so inferior to old Jack as to play second to him, performed the part of *Aboan*, and a shrivelled weatherbeaten old maid, of the name of *Francis*, figured away as the lovely *Imoinda*. Poor old Jack had one piece of property, and only one in the world, beside his clothes: this was a curtain of about four yards square, at once his pride, his comfort and his boast. To an acquaintance with this pompous travelling circumstance every new comer was without delay introduced, and every day received a commemorative hint respecting its value and importance, accompanied with an assurance, which it was treason against Jack's majesty to doubt, that it had risen and fallen upon better acting than any other curtain in the king's dominions, those of Drury-lane and Covent-garden themselves not excepted.

The night succeeding their arrival the School for Scandal was got up. Woolley played *Sir Peter Teazle*, and Warren, *Joseph Surface*, in which, as the wardrobe of Smith was too lean* to afford a dress suitable to the character, our hero was fain to content himself with a black suit, borrowed from the sexton of the parish church: but he minded it not; the house was good, and poor Smith and his company had a fair prospect of at least a temporary relief. From

* "Yea, for the obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no *lean* wardrobe."

motives merely of benevolence, Woolley and Warren remained at Glastonbury till two or three days before the opening of the theatre at Honiton, during which time they performed several plays, and did great service to Smith without accepting a farthing for their labour—their board, and nothing more, being supplied by Smith.

On their return to Honiton, Biggs performed there and at St. Mary Ottery, with tolerable success, which continued for some time. Thence they went to Tiverton, which Biggs, to his inexpressible rage and mortification, found already preoccupied by one Williams a country manager, and his company. Blinded by envy, and by passion, and rendered insensible to every other consideration, Biggs resolved upon making a spirited opposition, and to that end took possession of the parsonage barn, fitted it up and began the warfare with all his powers, which were now augmented by a reinforcement from London, of two strayed actors, Maxfield and Atkins. This step of Biggs had more of malice than wisdom in it; for though he kept the field he gained no victory, but rather lost time and money. At the best, the town was not worth a contest. Williams more prudent saw the folly of contesting the point and marched off, though he had some tolerable actors, among whom were Powell, and Mrs. Hogg, the latter being the heroine of the company.

And now the time approached when our hero was to separate from Biggs forever, and follow new fortunes. They were at that sweet watering place Sidmouth in Devonshire, when Biggs being again deserted by all his company, but Warren, Woolley and his own children, set off to Sherborne in Dorsetshire to pick up as many as he could of the company of Baker, a country manager, the same who has since been so well known at Boston. Warren corresponded with Maxfield who was now engaged at Plymouth, and who made an engagement for him and Woolley, with Mr. Jefferson the manager of that theatre. As soon as this intelligence reached them, the two young fellows, on a fine, clear morning in summer set out on foot and carrying their effects upon their shoulders walked, without once stopping to the city of Exeter (26 miles). They had between them not many pence; for though Mr. Jefferson had sent money to them to bear their expenses, it missed them, owing to the suddenness of their departure. After having regaled themselves at Exeter therefore with the best their finances would allow them, to wit, a cut or two of bread and a pot

of beer, they pushed on as fast as possible in order to reach Plymouth before their little was expended, and at an early hour reached Chudleigh a town nine miles from Exeter. Stopping here to rest themselves they accidentally fell in with their old friend Tag Davis the manager, who gave them a good dinner, which was well timed and by them greeted, "not with vain thanks but with acceptance bounteous."—Exercise conspiring with youth and constitutional vigour and with no small degree of that kind of internal yearning to which the sense of an empty pocket is hugely apt to dispose an empty stomach, harped their appetites aright, and rendered them so condescendingly complying with the solicitations of their hospitable friend, to do justice to his mutton, that they laid lustily about them, plying their knives and forks and bestirring their jaws with such energy and good will that they made a dinner which, to borrow a thought from *Gil Blas*, might excite envy in the canon of a cathedral. To this day it is remembered with many satisfactory and friendly recollections by our hero. "Tag was a kind honest soul," says he with warm emotions of friendship, "he gave us a good dinner, and I never ate so heartily in all my life."

While they were waiting for dinner Davis informed them that Jefferson's company was so very full, the probability was, they would get nothing to do at Plymouth, and therefore advised them to stay with him. He told them that he was then building a theatre at Westout, Exeter, under the patronage and encouragement of Mr. Friar a merchant of that place, who was resolved to oppose and injure Hughes the manager of the Exeter theatre, and who to that end supplied him (Davis) with money. He added that his company was then at Bovey Tracey on Tracey Common, not far from Exeter, where they would continue to perform till his new theatre was in readiness; and he concluded with offers of a kind too flattering to be hastily rejected. As they were persuaded from the circumstances related by Davis, that his information respecting the fulness of Jefferson's company was true, as the offers he made them were liberal and friendly, and as they knew him too well to doubt his sincerity, however they might question his prudence, they, on mature reflection, agreed to close with his proposals, and accordingly repairing to Exeter went thence to take a view of Bovey Tracey with intention to join the company, hoping they should get at least enough for their support till the theatre at

Westout opened. When the night of performance came, Warren, Woolley, Davis, and **ITINERANT RILEY** and his wife, who were of the company went across to Tracey on foot. The play was *Jane Shore, Hastings* by Reynolds. "Of all the theatrical adventures in which during my life I have been concerned," says Warren, "this was the very worst. When I looked at the place, I was really unable to stand it: in the audience nothing was to be seen but smock frocks and red cloaks." Under these impressions, he candidly observed to Reynolds that it was not worth his while to stay there, and desired him not to calculate on his performing the next night, for that he intended to go back to Exeter. The pride of Reynolds was hurt by this observation: he was nettled; grew lofty, and told Warren that they could do very well without him.

In Tracey there were two public houses; and it was in a hayloft belonging to one of these which stood at the lower end of the town, the company performed. Warren leaving the play-loft went down stairs and entering the taproom found a parcel of farmers sitting round the fire; they asked him to join them; he sat down and relishing their company very well stayed with them till the play was over, when the performers coming down he joined them, and they proceeded to make a dividend of the proceeds of their performance. It was not here as it used to be with Biggs: all was fair, not a farthing, but what justice intitled him to, was detained by Davis. The consequence was, that the shares were not contemptible for such a place; each received between five and six shillings. It was again proposed to Warren to join them, and by way of inducement an offer was made, to give him a fair share of that night's profits, provided he would undertake to play with them on the next. He agreed; *Romeo and Juliet* was the play appointed; and he undertook to play the two characters of Tibalt and Paris in the tragedy, as well as that of Lord Minnikin in the farce. He did so, and had played about eight nights altogether, when he was unexpectedly interrupted by the arrival of Biggs, who having received intelligence, where Warren and Woolley were playing, had come in pursuit of them.

The taverns of Tracey were all so full that Warren was obliged to sleep on a pallet laid upon the floor. One morning as he was reposing in this condition, his ears were assailed with a strange kind of thumping noise which awakened and somewhat startled him. On listening with all his attention he imagined that the sounds

very much resembled those produced by the club foot of Biggs as he was used to stump up stairs: as it approached nearer the resemblance appeared more strong; and he was put out of doubt upon the subject by the voice of his old greasy manager calling out in his usual loud tone, "is this here door, the room where they bees in?" Warren had scarcely a moment to reflect on this strange incident when the door flew open, and in stumped Biggs himself. "So so, here you are, are you?" said he, squatting himself down on a chair, "a pretty fellow, to think to fum Biggs—O you're a sly one, but I'm up to you—I know a thing or two—You can't put your finger in my eye, cunning as you are." "What do you mean?" said Warren—"What do you want with me?" "A rum question that too!—Why, what should I want, but to speak to you?"—"Well then" returned Warren, "go down stairs and I will dress myself and follow you directly." As Warren spoke in a peremptory tone, Biggs thought proper to comply and retired, desiring the other not to keep him long. Warren put on his clothes as quickly as he could, and joined Biggs who at first addressed him with affected kindness, and endeavoured to prevail upon him to return to his company, which Warren peremptorily refused. Biggs then changed his tone and threatened to resort to law, and call on the magistrates to compel him to go back and perform his contracts; to this Warren replied that neither was there any contract subsisting between them, nor should, nor could any magistrate in the realm force him to have any further connexion with him. He then reminded Biggs that his engagement was not a permanent one; that he (Biggs), had been deserted by his whole company; and that for three weeks during which they had been at Sidmouth with him, neither Woolley nor he had received a shilling; at the end of which time they had been left to shift for themselves in a strange place, unprovided and idle. "Ay, ay," said Biggs, "then d—n me but I'll be up to you," and left the house. Our hero could easily perceive that the brutal fellow intended mischief, but when, how, or in what form it was practicable for him to accomplish it, neither Warren nor Woolley could imagine.

They were not long left in doubt upon it. Biggs returned with an officer whom he desired to arrest *them there fellows*. What the grounds of arrest assumed by him were, they could not surmise; but knowing that he was profligate enough to swear to any thing, and to charge them with any crime however villainous, even rob-

bery itself, they felt very uneasy. As the magistrate, before whom they were to be brought for commitment, lived at a distance of fifteen miles, horses were ordered. Woolley rode behind Davis who resolved to accompany them; and Warren sat behind the constable while Biggs rode in great state by himself. Davis had formerly been an attorney in Dublin, knew something of the law, and could talk learnedly. When they arrived at the house of the magistrate, they were given to understand that his worship was at that time engaged in the examination of some other culprits; and that they must wait, to have that honour in their proper turn. After dancing attendance for a considerable time, they were at length called in, when the magistrate demanded of Biggs what the nature of his charge against the prisoners was. And now their anxiety and apprehensions were wound up to a painful pitch, they expecting to have some very serious accusation preferred against them, one perhaps, from which they should never be able to extricate themselves, without difficulty, when behold their honest accuser charged them with being journeymen tailors, whom he had hired to make clothes for him, and who had gone away from him, leaving their work unfinished. To this the magistrate answered that it was a business in which it was not competent to him to interfere; and that therefore he would not do any thing but dismiss the young men. On this Biggs flew into a great rage, and was so rude that the magistrate rebuked him, and bid him take care what he said or did. Then turning to Warren, he read him a long lecture, replete with good sense, and kindness, and strenuously advised him to return home to his friends and family, and mind his business. Being thus liberated from the fangs of that wolf Biggs, at least for this turn, Warren and his friend Woolley walked back together to Tracey.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON.

MR. ELLISTON was born in the parish of Bloomsbury, 1774. His father, a watchmaker of some eminence, resided for many years in Charles-street, Covent-garden; his late uncle was the Rev. Dr. Elliston,* the much esteemed master of Sidney College, Cambridge; who intended his nephew for the church, and placed him, when nine years old, at St. Paul's school. Having gained some applause in an English Thesis† which he delivered in public in the year 1790, he imbibed an immediate inclination for the stage; and shortly after this effort, performed the part of Pierre, at the Lyceum in the Strand, then occasionally opened as a private theatre. Pursuits of this description naturally produced remonstrance, and finally anger, on the part of those who had pointed out a very different career. His fancy, however, soared beyond the reach of prudence, and he quitted school at the age of sixteen, without the knowledge of his friends; and resolving to try his success on the stage, he accompanied a friend to Bath, where he engaged himself as a clerk in a lottery office, and remained in that capacity a few weeks till he found an opportunity of making his theatrical essay, which was in the humble character of Tressel, in Richard III.‡ Notwithstanding the success of his first efforts, it appears, that he was unfortunate in his desire of procuring an engagement, the company being full, and the manager of a provincial theatre frequently looking with a

* In consequence of the death of this gentleman, Mr. Elliston is said to have come into the possession of 15,000*l.*

† The subject of this Thesis was,

“ *Nemo confidat nimium secundis.*”

Trust not prosperity's alluring wreath,
The thorns of adverse fortune lurk beneath.

‡ Colley Cibber, known only for some years by the name of Master Colley, made his first appearance in an inferior situation. After waiting impatiently for the prompter's notice, he by good fortune obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage to one of the chief actors of that day, whom he greatly disconcerted. Betterton asked in some anger, who it was that had committed the blunder? Downs, the prompter, replied, “ Master Colley.”—“ Then forfeit him,” rejoined the other.—“ Why, sir, he has no salary.”—“ No! then put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him five.” To this good natured adjustment of rewards and punishments, Cibber owed the first money he took in the treasury office.

suspicious eye to the increased expenditure of twenty-five shillings per week.

In consequence, however, of the recommendation of Mr. Wallis (father of the late amiable Miss Wallis, now Mrs. Campbell), he was engaged by Tate Wilkinson at York, where he experienced so much disappointment and vexation, as the principal characters were all in the possession of other performers, that he soon became weary of his condition, and wrote to his uncle a supplianting letter for pardon and indulgence. His application having had the desired effect, he returned to London, and through the medium of Professor Martyn (another of his uncles), and Dr. Farmer, he obtained an interview with the late George Steevens, Esq. the editor of *Shakspeare*, who introduced him to Mr. Kemble. This gentleman recommended him to study Romeo, against the opening of the present splendid building of Drury-lane; but his patience having been exhausted before the house could open, and his circumstances not being in the most affluent state, he applied to Mr. Dimond, the Bath manager, who was then performing at the Richmond theatre, by whom he was immediately engaged. On his return to Bath, in the year 1793, he made his appearance in the character of Romeo, and found his former efforts had not been forgotten. A number of trifling circumstances, such as the indisposition of performers, &c. afforded a favourable opportunity of calling into action a versatility of powers which was before unknown even to himself, and soon rendered him a distinguished favourite.

While in the plenitude of his great and almost unprecedented success, the majestic doors of the new theatre, Drury-lane, were opened. Professor Martyn applied for information as to the terms his nephew was likely to procure if he came to town; and was given to understand, that forty, fifty, or sixty shillings per week, on a three years' engagement, were as much as could be hazarded on the abilities of a mere novice. This offer was prudently rejected, and Elliston immediately closed with the proposals of the Bath managers, who were anxious to engage him for a certain term.

Among the most successful of Mr. Elliston's efforts may be reckoned his obtaining about this time the hand and heart of a most respectable public character at Bath (Miss Rundall), who was as celebrated for her beauty, as for her skill in unravelling the mysteries of the mazy dance. Mrs. Elliston, now the mother of five children, is elegant in her manners, enjoys the patronage

of persons of the first distinction, and at present takes the lead of all competitors in the school of Terpsichore. Thus fortunate in his choice, and happy in domestic life, it is more than probable, that he would have remained content with the laurels the inhabitants of Bath were daily intwining round his brow, had not a promise been given to Mr. Colman, to perform at his theatre; and before the expiration of his honeymoon, he accordingly ventured to tread the London boards, June the 24th, 1796, in the arduous character of Octavian, in the Mountaineers, and Vapor, in the farce of My Grandmother: in each of these parts his efforts were crowned with success. Having thus fulfilled the promise he had made, he was obliged to return to Bath, to close the theatrical campaign of 1796, according to the letter of his article with Mr. Dimond. But Mr. Colman, being aware of the value of Mr. Elliston's youthful energies, secured him for the remainder of the season. A powerful reason soon after evinced itself for the manager's attachment to this dramatic stripling. The failure of The Iron Chest, on its original representation at Drury-lane theatre, and the singular circumstances attending it, are fresh in the minds of the *amateurs*. Mr. Colman was doubtless eager to preserve his literary fame, and holding the powers of our young actor in no inconsiderable estimation, determined on risking the performance of that play at his own theatre; and Mr. Elliston assumed the part of Sir Edward Mortimer, to the entire satisfaction of the public and the author.* In the course of the same season he acquired considerable celebrity from his personification of Sheva, in The Jew. The growing reputation of this gentleman at length induced Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent-garden theatre, to engage him to play at stated intervals, an indulgence kindly granted by Messrs. Palmer and Dimond, with whom he had now renewed his articles for three years. The novelty of this undertaking occasioned considerable jealousy in the Green room, and obtained for him the facetious appellation of the " Telegraph, or Fortnight Actor." His exertions in this way, however, did not answer the expectations of either party; and at his own earnest solicitation, Mr. Harris was induced to cancel the articles. During the following summer he resumed his situation at the Hay-market, with the same success as before, and then returned to Bath.

* That Mr. Colman was not only pleased, but delighted on this occasion, will be seen from the second edition of the Iron Chest.

On the secession of Mr. Dimond, Mr. Elliston obtained a large addition of characters, and from this period to the time of his leaving that city, he may be literally considered as the prop of the theatre.

At this period Mr. Colman selected a company of performers from different country theatres, and engaged Mr. Elliston for three years, as principal actor, and stage manager; but being wanted at the Haymarket so early as the 15th of May, and the Bath theatre not closing till July or August, he was obliged to purchase the indulgence by a renewal of articles at Bath.

Although in the course of the season no particular novelty offered itself, with the exception of *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*; yet it concluded successfully; the royal family, who, since a much regretted and melancholy event,* had but once visited the Little Theatre for several years, having honoured it with their successive weekly commands, from an interest they took in the success of Mr. Elliston.

The great variety of characters† into which the young manager had, from the nature of the undertaking, been obliged to throw himself, drew the attention of some of the winter proprietors; and pecuniary offers of no inconsiderable magnitude were proposed for his acceptance in the event of his joining the Drury-lane corps; but this point, however desirable to the gratification of his ambition, could not be brought about without the greatest inconvenience in respect to his other engagements. He would willingly have paid the forfeiture of 500*l.* by way of compensation to Messrs. Palmer and Dimond, but this was resisted and the completion of his term demanded. After some negotiation, however, it ended in a compromise of giving up one year of the engagement; thus leaving him at liberty to listen to other proposals at the conclusion of the

* In the year 1794, his majesty commanded a play at the Little Theatre, Haymarket, which drew a crowded audience to the house, and in endeavouring to obtain an early admission into the pit, a scuffle ensued in the entrance of the passage, which occasioned several persons to lose their footing on the steps to the pay-door. This produced the most dreadful confusion, and six or seven persons lost their lives.

† The following enumeration will illustrate the assertion: Sir Edward Mortimer, Walter, Octavian, Abednego, Sheva, Young Wilding, Doctor Pangloss, Captain Beldair, Henry V., Ben Block, &c. &c.

season of 1803. Accordingly at the end of that period, after a long and most laborious attention to the duties of his profession, he made a final bow to his friends at Bath, and prepared for a summer campaign.

The season of 1804 is rendered remarkable in the biography of this gentleman, from his benefit being at the Opera-house, where it attracted such crowds, that the house was literally taken by storm. At the entrance into the boxes, as well as at the pit, the torrent was so impetuous, that the door-keepers, money-takers, and assistants, were overwhelmed, and a scene of great confusion ensued, which none but those who witnessed it can conceive. Fortunately, no accident occurred, and the kindness of a British audience extricated a favourite from one of the most painful and arduous situations it was possible to encounter. The play was *Pizarro*, and the receipts 600*l.* but if all the places occupied during the confusion had been paid for, they would have amounted to 1000*l.* being the largest sum of money ever received by an actor at his benefit.

In 1804 he accepted a situation at Drury-lane, where he was engaged as a principal performer, and to assume both sock and buskin; and where he has personified Hamlet, Benedick, Macbeth, Ranger, Othello, Dorigourt, Romeo, and Penruddock. If the person of Mr. Garrick is to be considered as the standard of an actor's stature, Mr. Elliston may, if any thing, be taller than the unrivalled hero of the British stage, while the other parts of his person appear anatomically correct, and duly proportioned. To the countenance and eyes of this gentleman, nature has certainly been favourable, as they contain those marks of expression which want only study to render him fully efficient in all the various duties of his profession. In respect to the expression and gracefulness of his attitudes, no objection can fairly be made. We have often attended to the deportment of his person, and never found cause to consider any part of his action as either redundant or inelegant.

Othello is a performance in which he is not regularly great; although he sometimes bursts upon the audience in such a manner as to excite admiration. The fire of his youth leads him in this character, as in Hamlet, into too much occasional hurry, which time and reflection will no doubt soften down.

The requisites for the performance of Macbeth are of such a peculiar kind, that the man who possesses them in an eminent de-

gree, is in some measure but ill calculated for parts of an opposite description; yet this ardent candidate for fame never assumes the character without exhibiting many features of originality in his delineation of it. His performance, however, is by no means so methodized as that of Kemble, or rendered so complete, when considered as a whole. Elliston dazzles us with repeated flashes of original genius and conception, leaving intervals to discover the imperfections of his youthful efforts. But his performance clearly shows that he may be in that character, what at present he is not. In respect to comedy, Mr. Elliston sustains a wide range with a happy effect; but his genteel characters have always been most esteemed. That mellowness, however, which time alone can bestow, is still wanting; and when he has been allowed more leisure for the study of his respective parts, he will perhaps become as celebrated for the greatness and perfection of his scenic efforts, as he is now for his usefulness and versatility.

In the late Mr. Tobin's play of the *Curfew*, Mr. Elliston has evinced considerable improvement in the scenic art; and with the exception of his performance in the *Honey-moon*, he never exhibited a more finished piece of acting on the London stage. His delivery is void of all rant, and the passions of the part he expresses in those under tones of voice which unite energy with a fine discrimination of feeling. He delineates all the transitions of the soul with great descriptive excellence; preserves all the proportions of his portrait under a regular system of thought, and displays them in a rich and masterly tone of colouring. His *Fitzharding* is the *chef d'œuvre* of this gentleman.

If Mr. Elliston had any physical imperfection which was an obvious impediment to his professional exertions and prosperity, and which no endeavours on his part could remove, our publicity of it might appear ill natured, and operate as an injury to his public life; but when we are about to mention his inattention to propriety of dress, our remarks must be only taken as they are really meant, namely, that of rendering his person accordant in every respect with the character he assumes, as well for his own reputation as the pleasing effect a well-dressed performer affords to his audience.

In the support of early English characters, in which the costume is, in a great degree, regulated by fancy, Mr. Elliston is more happy in the arrangement of his dress; but when he appears as a

modern gentleman, he displays no taste in either the clothes he wears, or in putting them on. White *small clothes* with a blue coat and white waistcoat, constitute the dress of *his private gentleman*, either in winter or summer, which gives him more the appearance of a holiday-sop, or a smart hair-dresser, than an elegant gentleman. Mr. Elliston we think is less excusable for this negligence of attire than many of his brethren, because he mixes in the gay circles of fashionable life, where he must see men of elegant dress and deportment in a drawing-room. With a little more attention to the dressing of his hair, and to the costume of a private gentleman, he would appear to considerably more advantage before the public than he has ever yet done. Nature has given him a good figure, and while he continues to offer himself to public notice, it is a duty he owes to the consequence of his public character and to his audience, to give the most decisive effect to whatever character he takes upon himself to assume.

He wrote a play called *The Venetian Outlaw*, which was represented with great success for several nights after his benefit at Drury-lane in 1805.

MISCELLANY.

LAW AND DRAMA.

An attentive perusal of the lives of all the dramatic writers and actors, unfolds a fact on which a very curious philosophical inquiry might be founded. Many of those who have figured on the stage as performers, and a large majority of those who have been eminently successful in writing for it, have been originally bred to the study of the law. A fact so predominating in such a number of instances, cannot be the result of mere accident, and therefore manifestly indicates that there must exist, some connexion however imperceptible to the world in general, between the law and the drama. Congreve, Rowe, Wycherly, Banks, Murphy, the Colmans, Sheridan, Reynolds, Morton, without enumerating a long *etc.*, were either students or practitioners of the law. Had those gentlemen perused the quaintness of Coke, with the same eagerness they scanned the beauties of the poets, or *could* they have paid the

same attention to the enacting clauses of the statutes, as they have to the volumes of Shakspeare, Massinger, and Ben Jonson, I have no doubt they would have made as great a progress in one path of excellence as the other.

Dramatic authors may be said to resemble comets, guided by some laws and properties which regulate other bodies, though at the same time subject to move in such orbits of eccentricity, that you can hardly reduce their qualities or dependencies to any problematic accuracy. That there is a connexion between the law and the drama, I think, cannot be disallowed. I would take up a few minutes of your time in endeavouring to trace it; but before we set out on this trifling, though hitherto untrodden journey, let us perfectly understand each other; and we shall jog on the road quietly together. First, then, I must begin, perhaps boldly, by saying that genius is the same in all as far as respects *quality*; the only point mankind will differ in will be as to the *quantity* they individually possess. This quantity will vary in its effects, when impelled by prejudices of education, or habits of intercourse. If then genius is to be estimated not by *quality*, for that we allow to be the same, but by *quantity*, if that *quantity* can be modified by force of habit, or education, the point we wish to discuss may be easily ascertained.

I know I have a great authority, which to superficial observers may seem to overturn my premises, for Akenside says,

"With wise intent,
"The hand of nature on *peculiar* minds
"Imprints a *different* bias."

Though this passage, at first sight, may be thought to militate against the groundwork of my hypothesis, yet, if properly examined, I believe it rather strengthens it, and proves what I said in the beginning of this essay, that dramatic authors, like eccentric planets, had properties, such as gravitation, attractions, &c. common to other constellations; but at the same time, were governed by *peculiar* laws, which, *imprinting* a *different* bias on their systems, made them verge farther from, or approach nearer to their respective centres of motion. Akenside does not deny the "*quality*" of genius; for, supposing (which, in life, is found to be very true) that nine tenths of mankind possess abilities equal in extent, and bounded by mediocrity; yet there are some particular minds on which na-

ture imprints this different bias; that is, enlarges this *quantity* or expansion of faculty, to comprehend, as he emphatically remarks,

“ The fabric of the spheres

“ The golden zones of heaven.”

Or to weigh

“ Fate’s unbroken chain and will’s quick impulse.”

It may be objected, that, according to this hypothesis, a man might be a poet, a blacksmith, a mechanic, or a philosopher, if his education or intercourse led him to these pursuits; and if this were the case, a person could be only of the profession for which he was educated; and thus cavillers might introduce living instances and examples, to contradict such an assertion; but, in reply to this, I simply discriminate between *talents* and *genius*.

Genius is the general disposition of the mind for natural improvement; *talents* are the particular tendency of it. *Genius*, if I may be allowed the expression, is the fire or sun of the soul; *talents* are the rays which proceed in different directions from it. There may be *genius* without *talents*—there can be *talents* without *genius*. Three fourths of the world are men of *genius*, hardly one fourth men of *talents*. This may account for an observation which is made of mankind in general: that many people of what we term equal or moderate abilities, glide through life with no *particular* tendency of talent, with a general disposition to improvements of every kind. If this be granted, it is the *talent*, and not the *genius*, which constitutes the eccentric movement, and gives the different bias. The habits of intercourse or education would improve this tendency, though they could not destroy it. I conclude my figurative hypothesis by observing, that those minds which are occupied in a variety of pursuits, will scarcely ever approach to excellence, as a general distraction of rays will enervate the powers, and dim the brilliancy of *genius*, while those who adhere to one or two branches of improvement, from a concentration of force, (for if the pursuits are nearly similar, the talents will approximate, or, if opposite to each other, shine with greater lustre), will receive, in both instances, strength and fire from the centre of irradiation.

If, then, I can prove that persons pursuing the study of the law, have occasion to review men and manners, I arrive at this point of my position, that their *genius*, improved by study, leads them to the knowledge of mankind; if this be allowed, it follows, then, that

should their talents irradiate beyond this point, they will be the most proper persons, nay, will generally become dramatic authors; but if their *genius* concentrates here, they fall within my definition of three fourths of mankind, whose abilities never soar above mediocrity.

In studying the law then, we learn men and manners, by precept and example—1st by precept.

In examining the spirit of the law of nations, as far as respects the policy of states, we observe the prejudices of party, the petulance of faction, and schemes of general government. By pursuing the inquiry further (for history is absolutely blended with the study of the law) we learn the manners of the party who composed a faction, their views, and how far their interest had led them to make a stretch of power subservient to their passions. By going a very little further, we learn what these passions were, which gave elasticity to the springs of action, and particular movement to the whole machine. I could trace my arguments farther, by examining the characters of eminent legal personages, as connected with the history of our own civil government; but I should perhaps exceed the limits allowed for an essay of this kind.

The second point is easily discussed: by intercourse, that is what I mean by *example*, (for I suppose a lawyer has the most extensive intercourse with mankind, of any person in being) he comes to a very accurate knowledge of human nature, not only by the society he must move in, to increase his connexions, but by the *observations* he must make of the manners of mankind, that he may be able forcibly to appeal to the passions of every person who is qualified to compose a part of the jury of his country. A considerable degree of knowledge is acquired also, from attending courts of judicature; a variety of eccentric characters appear as witnesses; or, if he wishes now and then to be acquainted with the infamous modes of deceit, so often practised on the unsuspecting stranger in this great city, his attendance on criminal prosecutions, or knowledge of the crown bar, as treated by Colquhoun, will enable him to dive into the depths, and develop the mysteries which disgrace the opulent metropolis we live in. If he possess this fund of useful information, if he can exhibit a picture of these vices in the face of day, who is so proper a person as himself, “to hold the mirror up to nature?” Thus by precept and example, the student of the bar obtains a knowledge of *men and manners*. I will say nothing

of the vacant time he has on his hands, when perhaps to improve his powers of speaking, he attends theatres, and imbibes an early desire for stage productions and exhibitions.

As I have transgressed all bounds, I will take up a page or two of your next number, with a few more remarks, while I conclude this essay by observing, that I think, I have now proved, that the genius of a student at the bar, leads him to the knowledge of mankind; if then his talents irradiate beyond this point, he will become a dramatic author.

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For the Mirror of Taste.

Mr. Editor,

You have compelled me to reveal some other unfortunate incidents of my character, which a man of so tender and delicate nerves might wish buried in obscurity and silence. In my last communication I hinted that a certain lady to whom my addresses were paid, discontinued her favourable regards because I was convicted of eating pea-nuts,* while Othello was smothering Desdemona. This lady was a sprightly widow, beautiful in her appearance, but what riveted my adoration, she inherited a large patrimonial estate without any children by her former husband, which I should have regarded in the light of mortgages. She seemed to entertain no unfavourable opinion of the match until the adventure of the pea-nut unfortunately exposed that nonchalance trait of my character, which I now do not hesitate to acknowledge. She was possessed by nature of a strong sensibility that had been heightened and inflamed by the study of novels and romance. An union between two of characters so opposite would have resembled a wedlock between a sunbeam and an icicle. However, I persevered in defiance of the pea-nut, and might probably have overcome the antipathy occasioned by that incident, had it not been my misfortune to have been opposed by a formidable rival. This man wore an epaulette that I did not much regard; but the truncheon that intersected his person in a right line was to me an object of more serious contemplation. Knowing the passion of my Amanda for novels, and how poorly I was qualified to perform the character of Rinaldo, I laboured with all my might and main

* "Ground nuts."

to persuade her that a duel was no criterion of courage. I told her that it was my determination to make a bold stand against the caprice of the day, and if civilly invited to a contest of that kind to give decisive evidence of my courage by declining the invitation. The greatest men of antiquity looked upon their lives as in some sort the property of the public, and consequently inferred that the public alone had a right to the disposal. Sir, I never saw a pistol or a sword, but what I felt a certain foreboding anxiety that my life was intimately connected with the safety of the commonwealth. And in times so perilous as the present, is it not the duty of one who feels for his country's honour, one who abhors duelling, to reserve his life for great and important occasions? Notwithstanding these arguments are so obvious, nothing is more common, and to the shame of the age I proclaim it, than to behold the names of some of my brother patriots posted in our public papers as pitiful poltroons and cowards. Now, sir, to bear this with becoming dignity is in my mind the criterion of courage. These arguments so obvious and irresistible I attempted with all the eloquence in my power to impress upon the mind of my Amanda. I was perfectly aware of the prejudices of the public, and how ungrate that body is prone to be for the important services which patriots of my class intend to render their country. She listened with much attention, and I flattered myself that I had made a proselyte to my principles. My military rival, in the affections of Amanda, had before this broad avowal of my motives behaved towards me with the courtesy of a gentleman. We exchanged salutes very cordially, and I was by long practice enabled to look with some composure on the instrument that dangled by his side. From some cause or other, and to me it was perfectly inscrutable, his whole demeanor suddenly underwent a total alteration. He never returned my civility, but passed me with an indifference bordering on contempt. If I happened to meet him in the company of Amanda, he engrossed all the conversation, rioted on every smile, and left me the solitary consolation of fumbling my watch key in a neglected corner of the room. I remonstrated against his conduct with becoming indignation, and to my utter astonishment received a message of the following import. I hope Mr. Editor, you will pardon the illegibility of my writing; for my hand, at the distance of fourteen years from the time of the trans-.

action, shakes with such violence I can hardly preserve the mastery of my pen.

Sir,

The language which you uttered last night was such as no gentleman can hear. My demand is that you give me instant reparation. My friend, —, to whom I have communicated my intentions will make every necessary arrangement. Yours, &c.

After I had acquired sufficient composure to hold the pen, I returned the following answer:

Sir,

The tenor of your note is too plain to be doubted. I have to observe in reply, that my country to whom my life is devoted, cannot dispense with the services of her patriots, which puts me under the inevitable necessity of declining your invitation. You must observe, sir, that this is no choice of mine, but forced upon me by circumstances over which I have no control; and I hope that no perseverance on your part will compel me to resort to the laws of my country for protection.

Thus, Mr. Editor, ended this controversy; but the sequel of my courtship may easily be imagined. Amanda tired of my addresses informed my military rival of my determination if I should ever be summoned to the field, and suggested this expedient to put an end to my visits. The result was, that my rival inherits the lands I fell in love with, and that I shall ever hereafter remain the bachelor,

SIMON SHADOW.

The following review is extracted from a British publication of high repute. We think it interesting, as it contains not only some acute and well written observations on the personal requisites of Cooke and Kemble for their profession, but some opinions equally just and ingenuous respecting the country and people of England.

The Stranger in England; or, Travels in Great Britain. Containing Remarks on the Politics, Laws, Manners, Customs, and distinguished Characters of that Country; and chiefly its Metropolis: with Criticisms on the Stage. The whole interspersed with a variety of Characteristic Anecdotes. From the German of C. A. G. Goede. In Three Volumes, 12mo.; 15s. Matthews and Leigh, London: 1807.

THE statements and opinions of Englishmen, with respect to other countries, have always been perused here with great avidity; but as we can neither confirm nor refute the accounts they are

pleased to deliver to us, the authors, no doubt, frequently give a loose to imagination; and, when they are at a loss for facts, substitute whatever comes uppermost, without regard either to truth or probability. Their maxim is to *elevate and surprise*, and, setting detection at defiance, they boldly follow the career of *Baron Munchausen*, resolved to be equally marvellous, if they cannot rival him in entertainment. The *Stranger in England*, on the contrary, is more likely to deceive *himself* than *us*: if he *says his mind freely*, his remarks will merit our attention; he will exhibit to us, in their true colours, many manners and customs to which our national prejudice has given a hue that does not properly belong to them; and even his *own prejudices* (for what country is without them?) will afford matter for reflection and inquiry that may prove both interesting and useful.

M. Goede seems to be an ingenuous and intelligent writer; and, as far as we are enabled to judge, has taken a close and pretty accurate survey of our country. He arrived in England in 1802, just before the peace of Amiens, and remained here nearly two years. On his return to Germany he communicated his observations to his countrymen in five volumes, from which the most interesting parts are extracted in this translation.

The author commences with a liberal, and we feel happy in adding, a just compliment to our nation, “where (he says,) the genius of commerce has erected his standard, and the goddess of liberty has fixed her abode.”

“The generality of travellers found their expectation respecting the national wealth of this country, upon the airy visions of their own heated brains. They figure to themselves magnificent castles for the nobles, streets composed of splendid palaces for the rich, and every exterior of pomp and luxury: while the *people* form a back ground to their picture, grouped in miserable classes of poverty and wretchedness. But what do they find the reality? Here princes, lords, and commons, inhabit *one* description of houses; and many a wealthy Englishman devotes his life to the simplicity and domestic comforts of retirement.—No powerful baron presumes to aim at unbecoming preeminence; misery retires to the asylum which humanity provides for its relief; and an enviable equality is every where visible. The people appear to govern, while they obey; and never, on important questions, are they to be awed into a passive and abject submission.”

As M. Goede has travelled into different parts of the world, he makes several comparisons between London and the principal cities of other countries, particularly *Paris*; and his observations seem to be guided by candour and veracity. These comparisons, and the reflections which the author indulges on our manners and amusements, are in fact the most valuable part of his performance, for we cannot feel much interested by descriptions of buildings and streets which we daily see, or of occupations in which we are constantly employed; though even here there may be sufficient novelty to many Englishmen, who, feeling no curiosity, have made no inquiries, and who, having once visited the Tower, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and the Monument, are satisfied that they have seen every thing in the metropolis that is worthy of attention.

We thank M. Goede for the following opinion of our domestic character:

"I do not know a more interesting sight than an English fireside: and though the English are described to be a people unsusceptible of the finer feelings of the soul, and insensible to the charms of filial or parental affection, all who have had opportunities of domesticating in English families, must smile at the inviolate falsehood.

"This remark I understand to have originated in a Frenchman; and I cannot forbear laughing at the impudence of the charge, when I reflect, that, in France, no ties, not even that of marriage, are more lightly considered, than those of consanguinity.

"In England, a magic circle round the fireside, encompasses every blessing; they love, but they seem to do so in their own way. An Englishman detests the very semblance of any thing sentimental; whereas the third word from a Frenchman's lips, is always '*his heart.*' Now, in this country, I have never heard the term mentioned, except by divines or anatomists. The English are satisfied with the consciousness of feeling love, friendship, gratitude, and every honourable emotion; they leave the parade to others. A Frenchman will shed tears over a misfortune; an Englishman labours to conceal the agitations of his mind, and will force a smile upon his cheek, when his inward emotions are those of excessive grief. The former vents his boisterous friendship in a long embrace; the latter shows his cordiality by giving his friend a heartier shake by the hand. Hence it may fairly be inferred, that although the mutual affections between parents and children, are

not manifest to every casual observer; yet to such as have an opportunity to observe their character, it is obvious, that this *apparent* coldness is the effect of constitutional prejudice, and has nothing to do with the real sensations by which they are actuated. There are moments, however, in all countries, when the heart opens involuntarily; and those are, perhaps, the most exquisite of our lives."

His remarks on English authors, booksellers, painters, statuaries, and actors, are in general just; but Dr. Johnson is treated with too much contempt, and Peter Pindar with a superabundance of respect. We believe the anecdote is quite new that "the first happy impression made in favour of German productions arose from Mr. Pitt; who, in a very large company, passed a high eulogium on the 'Robbers,' by Schiller; a translation of which he had read with pleasure. This declared opinion gave celebrity to the work, and successive editions were rapidly called for." We suspect that there is about as much truth in this report, as in the notion that prevails (as Mr. Goede tells us in another place) on the continent, that Warren Hastings *bribed the House of Lords to acquit him!**

* In this observation the reviewer betrays either want of knowledge of the facts, or a hightoned party spirit. That the lords received any *direct* bribe, in fact, from Mr. Hastings, was never imagined; but that in their decisions through that remarkable trial they were corruptly influenced is as evident as any moral proposition whatever. That there were very few families in Great Britain of any rank or consequence, who were not in some one or more of their connexions, enriched in India by Mr. Hastings, cannot be denied; and all those in combination formed a body for which justice was no match; according to Father Foigard's logic, this may be argued not to be a *bribe*, but surely it cannot be denied to be a *gratification*. Besides, the king and queen interested themselves warmly in the cause of Hastings, as did all his majesty's ministers, but Mr. Pitt; and the consequence was, that his guilt or innocence became a mere party question, and the trial, a trial rather of strength—than of justice. Thurlow forgetting that he was to sit in that high court as a judge, became a mere advocate; and the archbishop of York, more mindful of the immense wealth, conferred on his son Mr. Markham by Hastings in India, than of truth or justice, went so far as to compare the managers on the trial to Marat and Robespierre. Mr. Pitt, however, differed from their lordships; for when the king proposed to confer a peerage on Warren Hastings, that great personage declared, that such a man as Hastings never should sit in the House of Peers while he was minister; and when the agents of Hastings in the House of Commons op-

On the English stage, and the art of acting, the author has expatiated at some length, and has shown more liberality, and more knowledge of the subject, than we usually find in foreigners when they discuss this topic. He is of opinion that the English stage has lost much of its former splendor, and that it is rapidly decaying. The opinions of Dr. Johnson, who, in a former chapter, has been looked upon as the foe of literature, are also supposed to have contributed to the decline of the theatre. Instead of stopping to combat this error, we shall extract the passage in which the author describes the personal requisites of Mr. Kemble and Mr. Cooke. Of these great actors he speaks fully, and very ably.

"The countenance of Kemble is the noblest and most refined; but the muscles are not so much at command as Cooke's are, who is also a first-rate comedian; but Kemble almost wholly rejects the comic muse. Both are most excellent in the gradual changes of the countenance; in which the inward emotions of the soul are depicted and interwoven as they flow from the mind. In this excellence I cannot compare any German actors, whom I have seen, with them, unless it be Issland and Christ; among French tragedians, even Talma and Lafond are far inferior to them."

Again,

"Kemble has a very graceful manly figure, is perfectly well made, and his naturally commanding stature appears extremely dignified in every picturesque position, which he studies most assiduously. His face is one of the noblest I ever saw on any stage, being a fine oval, exhibiting a handsome Roman nose, a well-formed and closed mouth; his fiery and somewhat romantic eyes retreat as it were, and are shadowed by bushy eyebrows; his front is open and little vaulted; his chin prominent and rather pointed; and his features so softly interwoven, that no deeply-marked line is perceptible. His physiognomy, indeed, commands at first sight; since it denotes, in the most expressive manner, a man of refined sentiment, enlightened mind, and correct judgment. Without the romantic look in his eyes, the face of Kemble would be that of a well-bred, cold, and selfish man of the world; but this look, from which an ardent fancy emanates, softens the point of the chin and

posed the vote of thanks to the managers, for their conduct on the trial, Mr. Pitt used in my hearing these words, "The friends of Mr. Hastings will best consult that gentleman's interest and character by observing a profound silence on the subject." [Ed. Mir. of Taste.]

the closeness of the mouth. His voice is pleasing, but feeble; of small compass, but extreme depth. This is, as has been previously observed, the greatest natural impediment with which he, to whom nature has been thus bountiful, has still to contend.

“ Cooke does not possess the elegant figure of Kemble; but his countenance beams with great expression. The most prominent features in the physiognomy of Cooke are a long and somewhat hooked nose, a pair of fiery and expressive eyes, a lofty and somewhat broad front, and the lines of his muscles which move the lips are pointedly marked. His countenance is certainly not so dignified as that of Kemble, but it discovers greater passion; and few actors are, perhaps, capable of delineating, in more glowing colours, the storm of a violent passion than Cooke. His voice is powerful, and of great compass; a preeminence which he possesses over Kemble, of which he skilfully avails himself. His exterior movements are, by far, inferior in the picturesque to those of Kemble.”

From these specimens our readers may form a judgment of the entertainment which these volumes will afford. The style is light and lively, and, among the contents, there is something to please every description of readers. The translation is dedicated to Sir John Carr, the intelligent author of the *Stranger in France*, *Stranger in Ireland*, and several other popular works.

AN ESSAY ON THE RIGHTS OF THE BRUTE CREATION TO TENDERNESS FROM MAN.

I PRESUME there is no *man of feeling*, that has any idea of *justice* but would confess, upon the principles of reason and common *sense* that if he were to be put to *unnecessary* and *unmerited* pain by another man, his tormentor would do him an act of *injustice*; and from a sense of the injustice in his *own* case, now that he is the sufferer, he must naturally infer, that if he were to put another man of feeling, to the same unnecessary and unmerited pain which he now suffers, the injustice in himself to the other, would be exactly the same as the injustice in his tormentor to him. Therefore the man of feeling and justice, will not put another man to unmerited pain; because he will not do that to another, which he is unwilling should be done to himself. Nor will he take any advantage of his own superiority of *strength*, or of the accidents of *fortune*, to abuse them to the oppression of this inferi; because he knows that in the article

of *feeling* all men are equal; and that the differences of strength or station are as much the gifts and appointments of God, as the differences of understanding, colour, or stature. Superiority of rank or station may give ability to communicate happiness, (and seems so intended;) but it can give no right to inflict unnecessary or unmerited pain. A *wise* man would impeach his own wisdom, and be unworthy of the blessing of a good understanding, if he were to infer from thence that he had a right to despise or make game of a *fool*, or put him to any degree of pain. The folly of the fool ought rather to excite his compassion, and demands the wise man's care and attention, for one that cannot take care of himself.

It has pleased God, the father of all men, to cover some men with white skins, and others with black skins; but as their is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the *white* man (notwithstanding the barbarity of custom and prejudice) can have no right, by virtue of his *colour*, to enslave and tyrannize over a *black* man; nor has a *fair* man any right to despise, abuse, and insult a *brown* man. Nor do I believe that a *tall* man, by virtue of his stature has any legal right to trample a *dwarf* under his foot. For whether a man is wise or foolish, white or black, fair or brown, tall or short, and, I might add, *rich* or *poor*, (for it is no more a man's choice to be poor, than it is to be a fool, or a dwarf, or black or tawney) such he is by God's appointment, and abstractedly considered is neither a subject for pride, nor an object of contempt. Now if amongst men, the differences of their powers of the mind, and of their complexion, stature, and accidents of fortune, do not give to any one man a right to abuse or insult any other man on account of these differences; for the same reason, a man can have no natural right to abuse, and torment a beast merely because a beast has not the *mental* powers of a man. For such as the man is, he is but as God made him; and the very same is true of the beast. Neither of them can lay claim to any intrinsic *merit* for being such as they are; for before they were created it was impossible that either of them could deserve; and at their creation, their shape, perfections, or defects, were invariably fixed, and their bound set which they cannot pass. And being such, neither more nor less than God made them; there is no more demerit in a beast's being a beast, than there is merit in a man's being a man; that is, there is neither merit nor demerit in either of them.

A *brute* is an animal no less sensible of pain than a man. He has similar nerves and organs of sensation; and his cries and groans, in case of violent impressions upon his body, though he cannot utter his complaints by speech or human voice, are as strong indications to us of his sensibility of pain, as the cries and groans of a *human* being whose language we do not understand. Now as pain is what we are all averse to, our own sensibility of pain should teach us to commiserate it in others, to alleviate it if possible, but never wantonly or unmeritedly to inflict it. As the differences amongst men in the above particulars are no bars to their feelings, so neither does the difference of the *shape* of a brute from that of a man exempt the brute from feeling; at least, we have no ground to suppose it. But shape or figure is as much the appointment of God, as complexion or stature. And if the difference of complexion or stature does not convey to one man a right to despise and abuse another man, the difference of shape between a man and a brute cannot give to a man any right to abuse and torment a brute. For he that made man and man to differ in complexion or stature, made man and brute to differ in shape and figure. And in this case likewise there is neither merit nor demerit; every creature, whether man or brute, bearing that shape which the supreme wisdom judged most expedient to answer the end for which the creature was ordained.

With regard to the modification of the mass of matter of which an animal is formed, it is *accidental* as to the creature itself; I mean it was not in the power or will of the creature to choose whether it be of one shape or of the other; or whether it be inhabited or animated by the * soul of a brute or the * soul of a man; the substance or matter of which the creature is composed, would be equally susceptible of feeling. It is solely owing to the good pleasure of God that we are created men; or animals in the *shape* of men. For, He that† formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, that he might *become a living soul*, and indued with a sense of feeling, could, if he had so pleased by the same plastic power, have cast the very same *dust* into the mould of a beast; which being animated by the *life-giving*

* It is of no consequence as to the case now before us, whether the *soul* is, as some think, only a *power*, which cannot exist without the body; or as is generally supposed a *spiritual substance*, that can exist distinct and separate from the body.

† Gen. 2. 7.

breath of its Maker, would have become* a *living soul* in that form; and in that form would have been as susceptible of pain, as in the form of a *man*. And if, in *brutal* shape, we had been indued with the same degree of reason and reflection which we now enjoy; and other beings, in *human* shape, should take upon them to torment, abuse, and barbarously ill treat us, because we were not made in their shape; the injustice and cruelty of their behaviour to us would be self-evident; and we should naturally infer, that, whether we walk upon two legs or four; whether our heads are prone or erect; whether we are naked or covered with hair; whether we have tails, or no tails; horns, or no horns; long ears, or short ears; or whether we bray like an ass, speak like a man, whistle like a bird, or are mute as a fish; nature never intended these distinctions as foundations for right of tyranny and oppression. But perhaps it will be said, that it is absurd to make such an inference from a mere supposition that a man might have been a brute, and a brute might have been a man; for, the supposition itself is chimerical and has no foundation in nature; and all arguments should be drawn from fact, and not from fancy of what he might be, or might not be. To this I reply, in few words, and in general; that all cases and arguments, deduced from the important and benevolent precept of *doing unto, as we would be done unto*; necessarily require such kind of *suppositions*: that is, they suppose the case to be *otherwise* than it really is. For instance *a rich man is not a poor man*; yet, the duty plainly arising from the precept is this: the man who is now *rich* ought to behave to the man who is now *poor* in such a manner as the rich man, *if he were poor*, would be willing that the poor man, *if he were rich*, should behave towards him. Here is a case which in fact does not exist between these two men, for the rich man is not a poor man, nor is the poor man a rich man; yet the supposition is necessary to enforce and illustrate the precept; and the reasonableness of it is allowed. And if the supposition is reasonable in one case, it is reasonable, at least not contrary to reason, in all cases to which this general precept can extend, and in which the duty enjoined by it can and ought to be performed. Therefore, though it be true that *a man is not a horse*; yet as a horse is a subject within the extent of the precept; that is, he is capable of receiving benefit by it, the duty enjoined in it extends to the man and amounts to

* Gen. 1. 30.

this,—Do you, that *are* a man, so treat your horse *as* you would be willing to be treated by your master *in case* that you *were* a horse. I see no absurdity nor false reasoning in this precept, nor any ill consequence that would arise from it, however it may be gainsayed by the barbarity of custom.

In the case of *human* cruelty,* the oppressed man has a tongue that can plead his own cause, and a finger to point out the aggressor; all men that hear of it shudder with horror; and, by applying the case to themselves, pronounce it *cruelty* with the common voice of humanity, and unanimously join in demanding the punishment of the offender, and brand him with infamy. But in the case of *brutal* cruelty, the *dumb* beast can neither utter his complaints to his own kind, nor describe the author of his wrongs; nor, if he could, have they it in their power to redress and avenge him.

In the case of *human* cruelty there are courts and laws of justice in every civilized society, to which the injured may make his appeal; the affair is canvassed, and punishment inflicted in proportion to the offence. But alas! with shame for man, and sorrow for brutes, I ask the question? What laws are now in force, or what court of judicature does now exist, in which the suffering brute may bring his action against the wanton cruelty of barbarous man? The laws of Triptolemus are long since buried in oblivion, for Triptolemus was but a heathen. No friend, no advocate, not one is to be found amongst the [†] *bulls* nor *calves* of the people, to prefer an indictment on behalf of the brute. The priest passeth by on one side, and the Levite on the other side; the Samaritan stands still, sheds a tear, but can no more; for there is none to help: and the poor, wretched, and unbefriended creature is left to mourn in unregarded sorrow, and to sink under the weight of his burthen.

But suppose the law promulgated, and the court erected. The judge is seated, the jury sworn, the indictment read, the cause debated, and a verdict found for the plaintiff. Yet what cost or damage? What recompense for loss sustained? In actions of humanity, with or without law, satisfaction may be made. In various ways you can make amends to a *man* for the injuries you have done him. You know his wants, and you may relieve him. You may give him clothes, or food, or money; you may raise him to a higher station,

* This term the author uses to express the cruelty of men unto men; and that of *brutal* cruelty, to express the cruelty of men unto beasts.

† Psalm 68. 20.

and make him happier than before you afflicted him. You may be feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind. You may entertain him, keep him company, or supply him with every comfort, convenience and amusement of life, which he is capable of enjoying. And thus may you make some atonement for the injury which you have done unto a man; and by thy assiduity and future tenderness, thou mayst perhaps obtain *his* pardon, and palliate thine own offence. But what is all this to the injured *brute*? If by thy passion or malice, or sportive cruelty thou hast broken his limbs, or deprived him of his eyesight, how wilt thou make *him* amends? Thou canst do nothing to amuse him. He wants not thy money nor thy clothes. Thy conversation can do him no good. Thou hast obstructed his means of getting subsistence; and thou wilt hardly take upon thyself the pains and trouble of procuring it for him, (which yet by the rule of justice thou art bound to do.) Thou hast marred his little temporary happiness, which was his all to him. Thou hast maimed or blinded him for ever; and hast done him an *irreparable* injury.

LOVE AND GENIUS.

By a lady, lately resident in this city, but now sojourning in Baltimore. These few lines are marked by a turn of thought rarely found in little productions of the kind. The mind that produced them has more in it; and we heartily wish it would more liberally deal out its productions to us.

Love meeting Genius t'other day,
 (I don't remember in what grove)
 Says Genius, " Why now, tell me pray,
 So oft you miss your aim, friend Love?"
 Says Love, " if I the truth must speak,
 My power, without your aid, is weak;
 Let Genius but direct my dart,
 'Tis sure to pierce the coldest heart."

Rosa.

WEEPING BEAUTY.

From morn to night, or griev'd or glad,
 Lucilla's looks are always sad,
 Her 'kerchief she with tears is steeping;
 Some think the pretty wretch gone mad:
 But lately I the reason had—
 She looks most beautiful when weeping!

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For April, 1811.

MR. COOKE'S NIGHTS.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 Monday 1st, | Richard the Third—Adopted Child. |
| 2 Wednesday 3d, | Man of the World—Weathercock. |
| 3 Friday 5th, | King Lear—Sylvester Daggerwood. |
| 4 Saturday 6th, | New Way to Pay Old Debts—Killing No Murder. |
| 5 Monday 8th, | Henry the Fourth—Of Age To-Morrow. |
| 6 Wednesday 10th, | Merchant of Venice—Spoiled Child. |
| 7 Thursday 11th, | Macbeth—Too Many Cooks. |
| 8 Saturday 13th, | Douglas—Love a la Mode. |
| 9 Monday 15th, | Every Man in his Humour—Highland Reel.—For the benefit of Mr. Cooke. |

MR. COOKE'S SECOND ENGAGEMENT.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10 Wednesday 17th, | King Lear—Modern Antiques. |
| 11 Friday 19th, | Man of the World—Prisoner at Large. |
| 12 Saturday 20th, | Richard the Third—Scheming Lieutenant. |

MR. COOKE'S THIRD ENGAGEMENT. (Playing with Mr. COOPER.)

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 13 Friday 26th, | Othello—Old Maid. |
| 14 Saturday 27th, | Gamester—Ways and Means. |
| 15 Monday 29th, | Venice Preserved—Don Juan.—For the benefit of Mr. Warren. |
| 16 Tuesday 30th, | Othello—Irishman in London. |

In the interval between Mr. Cooke's second and third engagements, there were two benefits.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| April 22d, | Castle Spectre—Lady of the Rock.—Mr. Pullen's benefit. |
| April 24th, | The Robbers—Children in the Wood.—Mr. Calbraith's benefit. |

MR. COOKE IN SIR PERTINAX MAC SYCOPHANT.

WE are now to accompany Mr. Cooke from his first and second nights, on both of which he performed Richard (playing the second more carelessly and therefore not so well as the first) to his third, on which he performed *Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant*, in MACKLIN's satirical comedy of THE MAN OF THE WORLD, one of the most vigorous dramatic productions of the last century.

No man that ever appeared on the British stage, from its first commencement up to the present day, has engaged in a larger share or for a longer time, the attention of the world in which he moved, than Mr. Macklin. As a man, his longevity—as an author, his vigorous intellectual powers,—and as an actor, his genius, science and skill have, for considerably more than half a century, held him up as an object of delight and admiration to all dramatic amateurs, and as a subject of severe examination and manifold critical discussion in the circles of literature. “Sent into this breathing world” under the most unpropitious circumstances of fortune, but with a frame of mind and bodily structure calculated to encounter difficulties, to subdue opposition, and to stem the roughest tides of adversity, he rose superior to the niggard destinies of his birth, and self-taught and self-supported,—owing nothing to the world, or to those that inhabited it,—acquired high renown as an author and an actor, and, as a man, maintained the character of an honest gentleman, and lived, if not in affluence, at least in a genteel competency from the end of the seventeenth century nearly to the beginning of the nineteenth, though not without troubles, probably with less sickness or bodily pain than ever fell to the share of any man who had lived an equal number of days.

Of so very interesting an object as this prime veteran of the stage, it would be unfair not to say something now while we are engaged in describing the great pleasure which, in common with all the good people of this city, we have experienced from the performance of that capital production of his brain, *The Man of the World*; and though some may cavil at our alluding to any of the circumstances of the author’s life, as more properly belonging to biography than criticism, yet as it is our business, in this number, to discuss his merits as a dramatic poet and an actor, and in two several plays to compare him, in the latter department, with the illustrious subject of our present criticism, Mr. Cooke, we think it incumbent on us to advert to those parts of his life and character which are in any way connected with those two productions, or can serve to throw a light upon the motives that actuated him in the composition of *Sir Pertinax*.

Mr. Kirkman, a very near relation of his, who has written his life, and who, to our knowledge, had access to the most authentic sources of intelligence respecting the birth of the veteran, relates that Charles Macklin was born in the year 1690, and was with his

mother, at whose breast he was then a suckling, carried off in a turkish from the field of battle of the Boyne, on the day when the fortune of William gained the final ascendent over James the second, in whose service the father of Macklin, who was a captain of horse, was that day killed, leaving his family a prey to revolutionary rapine and confiscation. In consequence of this melancholy event, Charles was left at a very early age to shift for himself. The play now before us, and Macklin's fame as an actor, preclude the necessity of particularly insisting upon the strength of the boy's genius; since such a play could be the production only of a mind by nature comprehensive, sagacious, penetrating and shrewdly observant of what passed in the world before him. From natural conformation he derived vast powers of imitation; while the spurns, the impositions and the evil treatment which unprovided and unprotected youth is fated to experience from the unworthy, (and unfortunately the unworthy compose a large part of the world) were sure to generate in a heart complexionally proud, stubborn, irascible and restive, a sufficient share of spleen to quicken imagination, to give edge to his satirical talents, and at an early age to call forth his mimicry and ridicule into exercise. Accordingly we find that the first object upon which he vented his splenetic humour and displayed his talents was a schoolmaster at Islandbridge near Dublin, to whom he was a short time sent by his mother to learn reading and writing, and who, partly in consideration of his helpless condition, and partly because the child was bred a Roman catholic, treated him with cruel, and as the old man often said, unexampled severity. This pedant, who, like Gil Blas's uncle, was one of the most expert floggers in the world, maintained a kind of warfare with the boy, in which the one probably inflicted as much mental as the other did bodily pain, the latter returning scarification with ridicule and mimicry, and the former rejoicing again with scarification till they separated in the usual way—the boy eloping and running away to England.

It so happened that this pedagogue knew as well as any of his fraternity how to shape the treatment of his pupils to his own interest, and always had as large a stock of fawning fondness and adulation at hand for the children of the opulent, as of birch and abuse for those of the indigent and distressed, insomuch that, as the veteran used to say, an acquaintance of only a week's standing with him would enable the dullest blockhead to ascertain by his treat-

ment of each of his scholars, the exact amount, even to a pound sterling a year, of the father's income. Not a tittle of this was lost upon young Macklin, who to a quick perception of the ridiculous in mankind, joined a bold, turbulent, intrepid spirit, and a violent abhorrence of whatever was mean or base; and Nicholson, for so the master was called, had the mortification to see and hear himself caricatured in the mimicry, and satirized with the wit of the boy whom he had exasperated with his insult and contempt. Nicholson and his wife were both natives of Scotland, and Macklin acquired the Scottish tone and dialect so completely, and mimicked both man and woman so exactly that they had frequently to go up and down stairs, at each other's supposed call, when it was only Charles, who over and over again deceived them; and sometimes they had the misery to hear the school room in a roar of laughter, at the unlucky boy's mimicry of the old fellow, stroking down and sleeking the hair of some of the scholars and domning the blude of others, according to the goodness of their clothes, or the rank or means of their parents. In this Macsycophant of humble life, the thickest sight may perceive the germ of that high court Macsycophant, who has for many years convulsed with laughter the audiences of London, Dublin and Edinburgh, and on this season backed by the astonishing acting of their favourite Cooke, so excessively delighted the people of America. In every country, and every department of life Macsycophants may be found, but the original object of Macklin's antipathy being a native of Scotland, he naturally chose to make his dramatic character a North Briton, and being in heart a passionate whig, he as naturally took aim at that court cabal headed by lord Bute, which every whig abhorred and every honest man must for ever execrate.

A single anecdote will be sufficient to display the temper, feelings and opinions of Macklin on the subject of politics. During the American war, being at Nando's coffeehouse, he got engaged in a warm discussion with one of those court zealots who then haunted all the public places in London and every other town and city in Great Britain. The crime of rebellion having been several times applied with particular acrimony to the colonists, Macklin undertook to prove that the Americans did not strictly fall within the meaning of the term, and to that end he entered into a learned definition of the word. This led to a deep argument in which his adversary happening to give the authority of a learned

professor in Glasgow who was his friend and tutor, Macklin started, and in an affected tone of surprise and regret, exclaimed "Then you are a Scotchman sir!"—"I have that honour sir," replied the other.—"Bless me, bless me," returned the veteran, "what a blunder I have made!—I beg your pardon sir, I most humbly beg your pardon;—I am sure if I had known you were a Scotchman, I should not have been so cruel, or so rude as to have defined rebellion in your presence."

Though loyal upon principle, and devoted to the British constitution, Macklin was all his life a zealous friend to liberty, and venerating the sovereign of Great Britain, abhorred the corruption of his ministers. Not long before the veteran died, he attended to give his vote at the Westminster election. When he mounted the *Hustings*, the candidates on both sides received him with marked respect and veneration, and the crowd hailed him with shouts and plaudits. He then advanced forward and addressed the people thus. "I was born in that propitious year when the sun of liberty first rose with its *orange* beams on Great Britain—I have lived to see it run its summer's day of splendour, and I am not without my fears that, old as I am, I shall live to see it set. I pray to God that I may die before that time: But while I live I will do my best to retard it, and therefore give my vote for Mr. Fox." In these few statements, the reader will discern the principles and spirit which actuated the author of the *Man of the World*, and which dictated the bold, ingenious, and animated satire, as well as the exalted political sentiments with which that comedy is so richly fraught. In *sir Pertinax* the author has accurately pourtrayed the principles and general character of the *Bute* faction, as in *Egerton* he has depicted those of its adversaries.

We own that it has made us smile to hear certain curious, censorial observations which have been thrown out on the *Man of the World* in this country since the acting of *Cooke* first raised it to its present importance. The stream of cheap and officious humanity which first sprung from that precious fountain of godly goodness, the French revolution, still continues to trickle through every thing about us; the hypocritical cant of pity, fraternity, liberality and candour is ready at every idle gossip's hand, upon every occasion; each new incident that occurs serves to awaken some tender gratuitous care for the welfare of those who feel no such care for themselves; and persons who could eat their din-

ners without the defalcation of a mouthful, if intelligence arrived that the island of Great Britain, North and South, was sunk and "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried," have lately felt the pinfeathers of their candour rise erect at the injuries done to the Scottish nation by this wicked play; a high compliment no doubt to the people of Edinburgh and Glasgow, by whom sir Pertinax is as much relished, at least, as he ever was by those of London or Dublin, Philadelphia or New York. The fact is, that all but the grossly ignorant view it, *not as a national invective but as an excellent political satire*. In no part of the world are the principles on which it is founded more firmly and rationally upheld than in Scotland—in no part is there a more lively contempt and abhorrence entertained for that kind of character which Macklin has pourtrayed in sir Pertinax. We are supported in this assertion by the simple fact, apparent upon the theatrical chronicles of England, that Cooke visits Scotland periodically, as Macklin did before him, to gratify the people of that country with his performance of the *Man of the World*, and of sir Archy Mac Sarcasm.

That this comedy was, from its first appearance before the public, viewed in the light of a mere political satire appears from the circumstances attending the original performance of it on the stage. The author conscious of his own purposes, and fearful of the fangs of the law, of the power of the lord chamberlain, and even of the strength which the court faction might have in the audience, prudently declined bringing it forward on the London stage, till the elevation of Mr. Pitt to the office of prime minister brought about a ministerial reformation and bruised the head of the court snake. This event promised to be favourable to the reception of the *Man of the World*, and Macklin ventured to bring it out to public view at Covent Garden. As the corruption and the vices it was aimed at were expected to be no longer "the mode at court," it was concluded that the exposure of them could neither subject the author to any legal penalty, nor give offence to those in power; while the old faction, who could alone feel or take offence at it, would in all probability, for their own sakes, avoid expressing a resentment, which would only evince that they felt the soreness of guilt, expose the impotence of their resentment, and of course subject them to the derision and still greater dislike of the public.

The old man was perfectly correct in his calculations. Some opposition was made on the first night—a few of that vile tribe, com-

pounds of stupidity, cowardice and malice; half snake, half gander, the **HISSERS**, exposed their forked tongues and brainless heads —(a miserable discontented minority such as frequently disturb our theatre) but were soon put down, as indeed the same class of troublesome nonentities ought to be put down among us. The comedy passed through its ordeal with thunders of applause, and continued to be acted as long as Macklin was able to perform sir Pertinax. Of his property in this play and in his “Love à la Mode” the old gentleman was exceedingly jealous and strict; never failing to resort to a court of law for a prohibition, whenever either of them was attempted to be acted. Since his death, the property having become public, Cooke has assumed the two parts with such success that his performance was at once considered as equal to that of the author; and for a long time past he has been allowed, even by the most partial admirers of the deceased veteran, to be much superior to Macklin in the personification of both. Of the powers of Cooke a stronger proof cannot be adduced than this singular fact. It was universally believed that sir Pertinax and sir Archy would die along with Macklin; and indeed it was natural enough to think so; for his excellence in both characters was so great that the imagination could scarcely figure to itself any thing more perfect, till Cooke appeared, who, by the superiority of his performance has afforded us a salutary lesson against overweening confidence in our opinions, and taught us how vain and presumptuous it is for any man dogmatically to lay it down that a thing is impossible, only because he himself cannot form a conception of its existence.

The original name of this comedy, and under which it had, for many years before its appearance on the stage of the metropolis of England, been performed in Dublin with unbounded applause, was “*The true born Scotchman*.” There we first saw it; and certain'y had we not since seen Cooke, we should have thought any man's attempting it an act of rashness, if not presumption. Cooke's delineation of it, however, convinced us that we were a great way out in our calculation.

Of a performance, no one part of which falls short of positive excellence, to particularize any passage as most deserving of praise may seem nugatory; yet we find ourselves irresistibly tempted to avow our opinion that Cooke's manner of relating the process of industrious sycophancy by which he rose from his “*beggarly clerkship in Sawney Gordon's counting house*” to his present rank, opu-

lence and importance, is the very finest specimen of natural, yet bold and vigorous comic acting and speaking, that was ever presented on any stage. His description of that *shrivelled, cadaverous neglected piece of deformity, in the shape of an eezard, or an efferciand*, whom he married for her wealth, together with his account of her death, were prominently beautiful. The manner in which he said, "*Ass soon ass I found she had the siller, aha! gude truith I plump'd mee doon upo' doun close by her, cheek by jole, and I sung, and I sighed, and I groaned as vehemently ass she could do for the life of her; ay, and I turned up the whites of my een, till the strings awmost crack'd again: I watch'd her attentively, handed her till her chair; waited on her hame, and got most releegiously intimate wi' her,*" was in the richest vein of genuine, chaste, comic humour; but when, his face glowing with exultation, with drolling self-applause and at the same time with earnest importance, he drew up his chair close to Egerton, by way of inferring his description, and continued, "*I married her in a week; I buried her in a fortnight; in a month I touched her siller; and wi' a deep suit of mourning, a sorrowful veesage, and a joyful heart, I began the world again,*" there was a full luxuriance of expression, without the slightest trespass upon nature, which we think may fairly be set down as the acme of perfection in the personification of character, and leaves all competitors, dead or living, as far below, as the eagle in his highest flight leaves "the crows and choughs that wing the midway air."

Without having ever seen Mr. Garrick, we cannot help inferring from the excellencies which Cooke possesses, in common with that great man (according to general report of him) that the natural genius of the latter is nearly akin to that of the former, abstracted from any imitation. The comedy of Cooke is as completely distinct from his tragedy, as if they were the workings of two separate men: And this was certainly one of Mr. Garrick's excellencies. We have heretofore made the same remark upon Hodgkinson, who, inferior though he was to either of those great men in tragic exhibition, had not only more generality and diversity than any other person, but marked his comedy and tragedy with expressions so very distinct that no one could have imagined them to be the offspring of the same parent.

It would be injustice to Mr. Cooke, and to ourselves, to let our rapturous enjoyment of the passages above quoted render us forgetful of the innumerable beauties he disclosed in the other

scenes. In his tyrannical, dictatorial conduct to his son Egerton—in his treacherous professions, his fawning servility, his abject adulation, and at the same time in his inflexible, tenacious self-interested dealing with lord Lumbercourt, (the *suaviter in modo & fortiter in re*, so much recommended by lord Chesterfield)—in his malignant joy upon discovering the supposed intrigue of Constantia, and in his mortification when she is proved to be innocent, he was uniformly perfect in conception, and forcible in execution. His manner of uttering “*the clearing up of this wench's virtue is dom'd unlucky! I'm afraid it will ruin all our affairs,*” will not be forgotten in Philadelphia while any of those live who witnessed it. Macklin's inferiority to Cooke consisted in this, that he was less plausible in his flattery of the peer, less versatile, and infinitely less insinuating. The inflexible hardness of his features, the loud sepulchral hollowness of his voice, rendered lord Chesterfield's *suaviter in modo* difficult to him. He must be a foolish lord Lumbercourt indeed who could swallow flattery from the stubborn, unbending, iron face and deportment of old Macklin; but in Cooke's aspect there was nothing to impair probability, while every turn of sir Pertinax, met ample correspondence from the admirable versatility of his features, utterance and action. In a word, as we never have seen, so we think it very unlikely that we ever shall again see a piece of comic acting so free from faults and so replete with excellencies as Mr. Cooke's sir Pertinax Macsycophant.

Having given our sentiments upon this great actor in sir Pertinax, we should close the article, if we had not accidentally met with a passage in a respectable critical publication printed at London, which speaks so correctly as well as pleasantly of both the play and the actor, and proves so indisputably the high professional estimation in which Cooke is held in London, that we think it well worth subjoining, as a part and indeed a very interesting part of the same subject.

“Mr. Cooke, returned from his *travels*, made his first appearance this season in Macklin's Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. The many rumours of his sufferance by spirits and bailiffs, “*his disastrous chances of moving accidents by flood—of hairbreadth 'scapes—of being taken by the insolent foe, and—redemption thence,*” seemed to have such an effect on the audience that they really appeared the more to *love him for the dangers he had pass'd*, and with, not

three, but six rounds of applause, greeted his return. Such a house has not been seen, since *the little hour of little Betty*. Towards the end of the second act, he showed symptoms of a cold, but he recovered himself, and on the whole drew a masterly picture of the Scottish Sycophant, all pride and meanness—impudence and servility.—And when he is himself, no stage exhibition can hope for more perfection from the deliberative and executive powers of man. We fear indeed, that this likeness is seen (according to the motto) *veluti in speculum*, and we are surprised that while it is such a national reflection on those who number so strong in the management of state affairs, the manœuvres and machinations of which are also so grossly exposed, we are surprised, we say, that the license is still extended to its representation. JOHN BULL's perpetual roar of enjoyment on the occasion is not much unlike the delight which a maniac takes in the rattling of his chains. Of Mr. Cooke's imprudence, until we again suffer by it, we shall say no more. As it respects himself it carries its own punishment along with it. Viewing him on all sides, his *failings* and his *vast merits*, we are tempted to exclaim with Chesterfield of lord Bolingbroke, “*What can we say but—Alas, poor Human Nature!*”

We venture to predict that Mr. Cooke's first return to the London audience will be greeted with such welcomes as no actor ever before received, and perhaps with more overflowing houses. Yet it is *here* we wish him to be; and we much doubt whether here he ought not to be, and will not yet wish himself. Did not connecting circumstances supersede private inclination, it is likely enough that he is, even now, of our opinion. He may in England have greater numbers because larger theatres to applaud him, as an actor; (we defy them to applaud him more,) but as a man, he cannot in the nature of things have so many elegant, steady, and cordial friends, of high character, quality, connexions, and opulence, to make his life at once pleasant and respectable, as he leaves behind him in Philadelphia.

MR. COOKE IN SHYLOCK.

WE scarcely know a drama which affords a greater scope for disquisition, critical as well as historical, than this of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. To neglect the qualities of the play while we investigate the merits of the actor would be but half doing our duty. When a person reads a play of Shakspeare's, he should look

upon himself as a commentator bound in respect to himself to investigate the faults and beauties of the work, to make a fair estimate of the author's merits, to discover as far as possible his excellencies, and at the same time to guard himself against being blinded by extravagant admiration. When a person sees a play of Shakspeare acted by a great and truly philosophic actor like Cooke, he may consider himself as listening to a production of the greatest genius that ever existed, elucidated by the practical and intellectual observations of one of the ablest commentators that lives. The object of the dramatic critic should be to unite both, and not only to join his commentaries with those of the actor in illustration of the poet's design; but to point out to his reader how far the author is indebted to the actor for the elicitation of beauties which before lay concealed, and how much of the merit of the performance of the latter may reasonably be ascribed to the genius and composition of the former.

It derogates nothing from the merit of Shakspeare that he has borrowed many of the fables and incidents of his plays from old ballads and traditionary stories; while on the other hand his adherence to them may be considered as an apology for many of the anomalies, the useless outrages on the unities, and the improbabilities which deface his plots. From the *Gesta Romanorum*—from Hollingshed's chronicles, and from the works of the Italian novelists, most of those plots are taken either immediately, or else circuitously through other writers. That the story of the Merchant of Venice is founded in fact there is every reason to believe. Doctor Johnson observes, it had been discovered that the fable is taken from a story in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, a novelist who wrote in 1378, translated into English, and that the translator of it was of opinion that the story of the caskets was taken from *Boccace*, both of which the doctor abridged: nevertheless the Doctor says, he believes that Shakspeare had some other novel in view. Steevens says that it appears from a passage in Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1579) that a play, comprehending the distinct plots of Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice, had been exhibited long before our great bard commenced a writer, the name of which was "*The Jew shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers.*"

It is astonishing to think how universally this extraordinary story has been known for many ages, and in how many countries

it has been related, to how many authors it has been ascribed, and in how many different shapes, of novel, ballad, and drama, it has been published.

In the *Gesta Romanorum*, now among the Harleian manuscripts, the story is found under the title of " *The Bond*;" of which a translation into old English was made, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde, and was extremely popular; and as Shakspeare's play contains certain parts of it verbatim, an inference is drawn thence that it was from it he borrowed the Merchant of Venice.

In Doctor Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, there is a song which bears the name of " *Gernutus the Jew of Venice*," and a ballad intitled " *The murderous life and terrible death of the rich Jew of Malta*."

Doctor Farmer states that in the manuscript of one Lidgate, belonging to Dr. Askew, he found a *Tale of two Merchants of Egypt and of Bagdad*.

The fable of the caskets is taken from a separate story.

In a book called " *The Orator*," translated from the French by Launcelot Pilot, Declamation the 95th is " *Of a Jew who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of the Christian*;" in this the christian's answer is circumstantially detailed.

Gregorio Leti, in his life of Pope Sixtus Quintus, tells the story but with the leading fact reversed, making the wicked offender a christian and the object of malice a Jew. Now Leti was a christian, was educated among the jesuits, and was not likely to take that side of the story, if he had not some proofs which to him appeared authentic.

And in a Persian manuscript in the possession of a captain Munas, in the East India Company's service at Tanjore, the same story is related to have passed in Syria between a Jew and mussulman.

Baker says, that the fable of the Merchant of Venice is founded on a fact which happened in some part of Italy; but with this difference that the intended cruelty was really on the side of the christian, the Jew being the unhappy delinquent who fell beneath his rigid and barbarous resentment. It has been well observed that this, if true, is a good exemplification of the fable of the lion and the painter. Had a Jew been the dramatist it would have been otherwise.

These various stories, which are truly interesting, shall in future numbers appear in our miscellany. Mean time we will address our-

selves to our Shylock, his author and his representative,—to Shakespeare and to Cooke.

Many of our readers will be astonished when we candidly avow our opinion, that unjustifiable as revenge is on christian and on moral principles, and bloody and inexorable as is the heart of Shylock, it neither appears to us so unnatural, nor is his resentment, in our opinion, of such unmixed enormity as spectators and readers in general think it. If indeed Shylock be that monster, which we firmly believe the world never saw, "*nulla virtute redemptum*," no candid casuist will say that he is "*nulla injuria redemptum*." Though his revenge is abominable, it appears by his own showing, and the admission of his enemies, that his wrongs have been extreme and his provocations manifold and vexatious, and the more extreme and vexatious because extended to his whole nation, and wreaked upon them for their adherence to their religious faith, in which, whether that faith be orthodox or wrong, their sincerity ought to protect them from sanguinary persecution. Shall we own it?—though hating the Jew through four acts, we never could withhold our pity from him in the conclusion.

Shakspeare having taken up the story on the side most favourable to popularity, and perhaps most congruous with his own opinion respecting the fact, not contented with the naked story as delivered down to him, resolved to enhance its enormity, and has omitted no one circumstance which can tend to blacken the character of Shylock and render it disgraceful to that body of human creatures to which it is supposed to belong. For this purpose he begins by erecting a contrast to the selfishness, cruelty and subtlety of Shylock, in the ardent friendship, the placid benevolence, and the generous nature of Antonio, whom he introduces first to the audience for the purpose of inlisting their prepossessions in his favour. When Shylock appears, the first words he utters mark that character so hateful, though necessary, to man, *the Usurer*; and the cautious calculation with which he ponders on the risk of crediting Antonio, speaks the coldness and hardness of his heart, while his baseness, his vindictiveness and his hypocrisy are brought out in glowing colours by the hatred he expresses (aside) to Antonio, contrasted with his fairfaced fawning professions of kindness to the same object.

How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him, for he is a christian;

But more, for that, in low simplicity,

He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance with us here in Venice.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He HATES OUR ANCIENT NATION; and he rails,

Even there where merchants most do congregate,

On me, my bargains, and my well won thrift,

Which he calls interest.—Cursed be my tribe

If I forgive him!

Now, if hating his nation, and reviling him personally, be not motives to dislike, we know not what can be; and we find that Antonio, so far from denying or apologizing for his unjust and evil treatment of the Jew, owns it, boasts of it, and avows that he will do it again.

Signior Antonio, many a time, and

Oft on the Rialto, have you rated me

About my moneys and my usances:

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;

For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,

And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that which is my own.

Well then, it now appears, you want my help:

Go to then: you come to me and you say,

Shylock, we would have moneys; you say so:

You that did void your rheum upon my beard

And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur

Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I say

“ Hath a dog money?—Is it possible

“ A cur can lend three thousand ducats?”—or

Shall I bend low, and, in a bondman key,

With bated breath, and whispering humbleness,

Say this,—“ Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last;

You spurn'd me such a day; another time

You call'd me—dog. And for these courtesies,

I'll lend you thus much moneys.

Shakspeare, though intent upon exaggerating the wickedness of the Jew and making Antonio personally amiable, seems not less desirous to expose the persecuting spirit which so long abused and disgraced the professors of our divine religion;—

and to mark its effects as more dire and pernicious, he enslaves to it a man eminently possessed of the most lovely virtues—of friendship, justice, generosity, and a kind affectionate heart; over whom it has such perfect dominion that in the fulness of his hatred to the sect, he uses the most foul and provoking terms of abuse in answer to the Jew's humble expostulation, and that too while begging a favour from him.

ANTONIO. I am like to call thee so again;
To spit on thee again—to spurn thee too.

A friend of ours, whose ingenuity we have frequent occasion to admire, not long ago censured Shylock's charge and Antonio's acknowledgment of spitting on the Jew as unnatural and too low for a christian gentleman. Now, as others may have conceived the same objection, we will, in order to obviate it, state a few facts which came to our knowledge during a compulsory residence of near two years in Spain as a prisoner of war. Among that superstitious people thousands of fanatical opinions prevail, and thousands of ridiculous legends are circulated and most piously believed, of which few in Great Britain or America have so much as heard. One of these is, that on account of the Jews spitting upon our Saviour at his crucifixion, it was from that time forth ordained that no Jew should ever spit out, and that, for the more certainly carrying this inhibition into effect, the whole nation are rendered physically incapable of ejecting their spittle; while on the contrary it is piously believed to be the duty of a good christian to spit upon every Jew. From this it results that Spaniards feel such an abhorrence of being spit upon, that few of them would fail to return it on the spot with death. "Do you take me for a Jew?" would be the word, and the word would be followed with the knife or stiletto. Shakspeare, therefore, is no less accurate in this part than he is in the characteristic conduct of almost all the persons of his dramas.

We cannot refrain from relating a fact that came within our own knowledge, as it serves to show the state of persecution under which this unfortunate portion of our fellow beings groan, even in England. Some years ago the writer of this bought, of a Jew who lived by making Morocco chamber slippers, two pair, as he was hawking them through the streets of London. Not having silver enough to pay for them, he offered him half a guinea, and desired

him to give him the difference. This was at the shop door of an eminent mercer's in the strand. The poor Israelite timid from persecution and a sense of the inequality of his condition, and rendered cautious by the evils experienced every day by his tribe, refused to touch the half guinea, but begged this writer to throw it down on the counter, and let the mercer first see it. Being interrogated as to the motives of this caution, he replied, that if the half guinea happened to be a bad one, and it became a matter of contest, nothing he could say in his own defence would acquit him of the fraud, or save him from the punishment annexed to it.

In this act of the Merchant of Venice there is nothing of that vehement passion necessary to elicit the higher powers of Cooke. But even in this, he was here eminently great: we have seen him more so; but still he was Cooke, even here. We own that we were disappointed in one passage, because in departing from his original reading in London, he omitted one of the most prominent of the many beauties we had discovered in him, and one which we were, before he came, in the habit of particularly describing to our friends on this side the Atlantic. Instead of saying as others do, and as he was used to do, to our great surprise and regret he read

Many a time and oft,
On the Rialto you have rated me,—

he formerly read it thus,

Many a time—and oft
On the Rialto—you have rated me.

The latter reading we think exquisitely beautiful and judicious; not only because it gets rid of a vulgarism, to wit, the old woman's phrase when telling her story of "*many a time and oft*," but because by making the offence as committed *oft on the Rialto*, he enhances the magnitude of the injury done him by Antonio. As if he had said, by transposition, "*Many a time you have rated me, and what made it worse, often on the Rialto*,"—*on change,—in the great place of business*. This too exactly corresponds with his previous charge,

And he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well won thrift.

Yet we have never seen the charges of the Jew half so well or pointedly sent home; never his hypocrisy so forcibly or judiciously

marked; never the feigned friendship and simulated good temper so admirably hit off as when he says,

Why, look you, how you storm;
I would be friends with you, and have your love!

and, above all, we think that the exclamation of

O father Abraham! what these christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others,—

never was uttered any thing approaching to equal felicity, by MACKLIN, HENDERSON, Mossop, or even SHERIDAN, who, in this act of Shylock, greatly surpassed the other three.

In the soliloquy which Shylock speaks apart,

" How like a fawning publican he looks!" &c.—

Macklin took the lead of all men that ever lived: there was an expression of implacable heart-seated vindictiveness, a savage, brutal, gloomy ferocity marked in the saturnine countenance and sepulchral voice of Macklin, which rendered his utterance of the two lines,

If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,—

more hateful, and terrible than those who have not seen the man and heard him utter them, can possibly imagine.

(To be continued.)

THE KNIGHT OF SNOWDOWN.

A New Musical Drama.

UPON a story in Scott's beautiful poem, THE LADY OF THE LAKE, a musical play has been constructed called the Knight of Snowdown, which was performed in London, for the first time in the beginning of last February. To every one who had perused that beautiful poem (and what person of taste had not?) the title of the play was a sufficient intimation of its origin. The advertisement of it no sooner appeared therefore, than the most lively curiosity pervaded London, and the house was filled with people anxiously expecting to see one of the most interesting stories of the Lady of the Lake presented to the eye and the ear as well as the understanding with every charm

which a dramatic form could lend it. Nor were they disappointed; since, if we may credit the reports of the London publications, no play that has for a long time appeared, received or merited more applause. One critic speaks of it to this effect:

No story in poetical romance, even without excepting any of the former productions of this distinguished writer, is more formed to win and fix the attention, none more suitable to the wildness and irregularity of the modern drama. We find in his pages as perfect a description of all the striking peculiarities of feudal manners, and of the lofty and imposing pride of chivalry, as it is possible to furnish, unimbodied, to the eye of the inquirer, and it was natural to suppose, that when cast into a dramatic form, and aided by the preparation and embellishments of a theatre, it must afford a living picture, admirable for its precision, and interesting for its general character.

Such is the musical farce before us, the success of which was proportioned to its merits. There are of course some deviations from the original, but they are fewer than might have been expected and were rendered absolutely necessary, by the narrowness of the limits allowed to the drama: with these exceptions, the author has scrupulously adhered to the great original.

Nothing, it is said, could surpass the charming effect produced in representation, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of Roderick Dhu's host, when, on sounding his bugle, the whole martial clan obedient to their chieftain's call, started into sight from the concealment in which they lay in the obscurity of the forest. Never did theatrical contrivance, elicit a more loud or lasting burst of admiration.

Of the musical part it is impossible to say too much in praise. The composer has done every thing for it, that taste, genius and science could achieve. The overture inspired the house with a delight which continued, rather with increase than diminution, to the end of the piece. The old Scottish airs so universally admired for their sweetness and vivacity are imitated with unusual felicity—and altogether there has seldom if ever been a stronger instance of the fascination of the mind by the delightful illusions of the senses.

To complete the whole, the scenery is said to have been beyond all former example exquisitely beautiful, and to reflect no less credit on the painter, than does the music on the composer.

THE FINE ARTS.

IT is pleasing to remark, as it affords, perhaps, the least dubious proof of our progress in refinement, that of late a very eager attention has been directed in certain sections of the United States to the cultivation and improvement of the liberal arts.

Eminently conspicuous by the variety and splendour of her public institutions, the city of Philadelphia, as was to be anticipated, has taken the lead in this new and glorious career of distinction. By the contributions of private individuals, we have now erected an academy of the fine arts, which if sustained by the same generous and enlightened spirit that founded it, may, at no distant period, challenge a comparison with some of the similar institutions of Europe.* As a school of the arts, this establishment promises to be productive of the most important results. Containing some of the finest models in painting and statuary, it cannot fail indeed to correct the taste, and to discipline the rising genius of the country. But in another view, its utility has already been very distinctly evinced. By holding out to professional artists an appropriate apartment for the display of their productions, it has served to kindle that species of honourable competition which excites to the highest exertion of the powers, and it furnishes, what to them is a not less interesting consideration, the means of effecting a prompt and advantageous sale for their works.

We have recently surveyed with sensations of unmixed delight, the first annual exhibition of the academy. To one less conversant than ourselves with the just pretensions of many of the American artists, the collection of admirable paintings and engravings presented on this occasion, would indeed be matter of surprise.

Through the courtesy of a friend we hope soon to be able to enrich the pages of our journal with a detailed and critical account of this exhibition, so creditable to the talents of the artist, and the magnificence of the patron.

* We understood that the suggestion of founding this academy came originally from Mr. HOPKINSON, and that our city is indebted, in an eminent degree, for this monument of her taste and liberality, to the ardent and persevering exertion of that gentleman. Whoever wishes to learn more of the history of this establishment, or delights in an eloquence pure and animated, should peruse the discourse lately delivered before the academy by Mr. Hopkinson.

But we cannot delay a moment in calling the attention of the public to the productions of a very extraordinary youth who has arisen among us. The portrait of Mr. Cooke in the character of Richard which is here prefixed, is one of several of that celebrated actor, in different characters, drawn by Master **CHARLES LESLIE**, of this city, who has scarcely yet entered his sixteenth year!!

It is our intention to have the whole of this valuable series engraved in the best manner by Mr. EDWIN, and to present them to our subscribers in the ensuing numbers of the **Mirror**.

Of these spirited and accurate delineations little need be said in praise by us. They are *living pictures*, and will speak for themselves. By the united voice of all who have seen them, they are pronounced to be among the happiest efforts of the pencil in this rare and difficult department of the art. What, however, adds much to the execution, is, that they were done from mere recollection, without the benefit of a sitting; a circumstance which alike illustrates the singular aptitude of the artist, and the wonderfully impressive and characteristic style of Mr. Cooke's playing.

Nor should it be concealed that the habitual pursuits of Master **LESLIE** have been altogether alien from the path to which nature seems to have destined him, and that his excellence as a painter is wholly due to the energetic impulses of a **GENIUS, HITHERTO UNFOSTERED, UNSUSTAINED, UNINVIGORATED, and UNTUTORED.**

Besides the portrait of Mr. Cooke, in the character of Richard, from the pencil of that wonderful boy, young **LESLIE**, we present our readers with a fine likeness of Mr. Cooke in his own proper person. The picture from which this engraving is taken holds a distinguished rank among those productions of Mr. Sully which enrich our exhibition, and reflect so much credit on that admirable artist. To Mr. Benjamin Wilcox, whose property the picture is, we are indebted for the privilege of having it engraved: and to Mr. Edwin for what we consider as one of the finest specimens of his skill.

Thus we have discharged our due to our subscribers. We owed them a print for the number of last December, and we have paid it with an admirable likeness of the greatest of actors.